

ESSAYS

MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

SHOSHEE CHUNDER DUTT.

'E'en I myself, though wanting to be taught,
May yet impart a hint that's worth your thought."

CALCUTTA:

PRINTED BY F. CARBERY, MILITARY ORPHAN PRESS.

1854.

P R E F A C E.

SOME explanation perhaps may be expected to account for the appearance of the present volume, especially as many very able writers have already treated on some of the subjects of the following Essays. The only apology, however, which the author can venture to offer, is that he did not consider the subjects quite exhausted when he undertook to examine them; and he believes at this moment, that he has viewed them generally, in a different light from that in which they were viewed by most of his predecessors. His labors, therefore, he trusts, will not be found altogether barren of original information. That he is indebted for a large portion of his information to others he does not deny, for he has freely availed himself of the abundant materials collected by earlier laborers on the same field. But besides those materials he has collected others himself: and his views and opinions are entirely his own. From those views and opinions many of his readers perhaps may dissent, the author's sentiments

on several points being considerably different from those generally entertained ; but he trusts that, as such disagreement is not inimicable to the advancement of truth, it will give no offence. Where he could not conscientiously agree with the opinions of others, it was his bounden duty to record his own sentiments irrespective of other existing impressions. If he is wrong in any of his conclusions he is open to conviction. He has not been guilty of any wilful misrepresentation, or any undue partiality. His opinions, such as they are, have at least the merit of being honest ; and his only object has been to elucidate the truth. If he has succeeded in this in the smallest degree his labors have not been altogether fruitless.

It is right to add that the Essays now collected together, were originally published as contributions to the local periodicals. The first three appeared in *Saunders' Magazine*, with the exception of the concluding portion of the second, wherein Vedantism is contrasted with Christianity, which was printed, as a distinct article, in the *Calcutta Review*. The historical sketch of the Rohilla Afghans was published in a periodical called the *Oriental Miscellany*, now extinct. Of this Essay nothing further need be said than that it is a fragment of a bolder attempt,—that of writing a History of India,—which the author has since prudently abandoned. The Essay on Hindu Caste was originally written in competition for a prize offered by the *Calcutta Christian Tract Society*. The prize was carried off by the Revd. Mr. Bowers, of Tanjore.

But the adjudicators were pleased to direct "the attention of the Committee" of the *Tract Society* "to two others," the author is here quoting from the Prefatory Notice prefixed to Mr. Bowers' Prize Essay, "as being likewise distinguished by great merit. One of these was the production of Baboo Shoshee Chunder Dutt, and the other of the Revd. Krishna Mohan Banerjee. To the former an additional prize was awarded, and both have since been published." The Essay was originally printed first in the *Christian Observer*, and then separately, in the form of a pamphlet. It has since undergone some slight revision. The last Essay in the volume, on Hindu Female Education, appeared in *Ledlie's Miscellany*. Some fastidious readers, viewing it in connection with a preceding one, the Essay on Hindu Women, may object that the same grounds have partially been trodden over in both. This the author admits. The Essays were originally written for different periodicals, and that will account for the circumstance. Since then he has not been able to give them such wholesale revision as would have obviated the objection.

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page.</i>
YOUNG BENGAL; OR, THE HOPES OF INDIA,	1
VEDANTISM AND THE BRUHMA SUBHÁ,	49
WOMEN IN INDIA; THEIR CONDITION AND CHARACTER,	118
THE ROHILLA AFGHANS IN INDIA,	164
HINDU CASTE; ITS NATURE, ORIGIN AND TENDENCY,...	204
HINDU FEMALE EDUCATION,	267

MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS.

YOUNG BENGAL; OR, THE HOPES OF INDIA.

WHAT'S Montague? What's in a name? asked the pretty Juliet, when she had given away her heart to the truant Romeo; and she argued syllogistically, that a rose called by any other name would smell as sweet—

So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called.

Admitting the full force of her argument, we acknowledge that, in itself, a name is nothing. Yet when it comports not with reason, or when it is not accurate in its application, or when it does not express the meaning it would convey, nothing though it intrinsically be, it is too often productive of wrong notions, and is not therefore altogether to be despised. This is perhaps best exemplified in the

case of the term "Young Bengal," a name intended to designate the rising community of India ; but, not having been selected with forethought, nor applied with precision, it is so indistinct and vague in the idea it conveys, that people have found themselves quite at a loss to decide whether the epithet was expressive of opprobrium or praise. Some use it sneeringly, and in contempt of certain low habits which mark the character of certain of the native youths. Others, in their application of it, wish it to be understood as expressive of the recognition of a mental and moral worth in the rising generation to which their forefathers had no claim. And this contrariety of interpretations obtains amongst the highest authorities. Who shall decide when doctors disagree ?

Not to dwell longer, however, on a name, we will at once take up our subject. It is our purpose to dwell for a time on the character of the youths of India, to examine their importance and claims, and to see what hopes, if any, India may build upon their exertions. Properly to conduct this inquiry we must view the question on two sides, or rather examine the two divisions of the class, between which exists a wide difference. Young Bengal, itself a division, is subdivided within itself ; and those subdivisions stand almost as apart from each other, as the aggregate whole does from the old orthodox school. Young Bengal, liberal and magnanimous, is quite a distinct body from Young Bengal, insolent and profligate ; Young Bengal hard-reading, has no affinity with

Young Bengal hard-drinking. And this will require carefully to be discriminated.

Perhaps our inquiry should commence with an examination into the character of Old Bengal. But this is rather an unpalatable task, and we have no appetite for it. The class has been often represented in the numerous exhibitions of the Hindu character, which Missionaries and other gentlemen have given us. Every stone has been picked up to shy at men, who, having nothing in common with their historians, have received at their hands no consideration or favor. The errors and falsehoods of their acquirements have been unsparingly exposed, and the exposure backed by citations of their ways and doings. It cannot be necessary for us to repeat them here again ; and, for our own part, we would rather undertake to show up the worthies of the olden time, as specimens of a class of men now rapidly dying away, than repaint the oft-painted picture of ignorance, prejudice and corruption, that prevailed amongst the mass of that community, which, a few years hence, will be remembered with the things that were.

But if their forefathers were such scoundrels and blockheads as they have been described, it cannot be asserted that the present generation is neither wiser nor better. The original dearth of superior intellect in the country is rapidly disappearing. The impetus which the British possession of India has been the means of imparting to the progress of knowledge, has already yielded an intellectual crop which leaves no

legitimate reason for despair with respect to future improvements. It was impossible that a revolution in the government, and such a revolution as the British conquest of India effected, should not produce a mightier revolution in the minds and hearts of men. Old prejudices and old feelings were soon found effete and stale ; new notions had exploded the primeval ideas of men and things ; and Young Bengal began to rise into importance. At first he was sneered at and despised, but that was when his intellectual affluence was unknown. So were California and Australia, whence gold is now coming by shiploads, slighted and contemned ere science and adventure had discovered their worth. Gold has now been found in the Hindu brain—intellectual and moral gold. This the sharpness of intellectual geologists had not discovered before. Then the hour of discovery had not yet come. But it has arrived at last, and the position of Young Bengal, in the estimation of the public, has simultaneously begun to alter. It is not usual to name names, else we could point out many individuals who have already established the most desirable reputation that their friends could wish, the reputation of young men who promise to do something ere they grow old. The learning that had been for so many years in the wane, the intellectual faculties that under misrule and the thralldom of a bestial religion had lain so dormant, are now gradually vindicating themselves. The Hindus, treated with contempt by their Mahomedan conquerors, had become

contemptible; the arts of civilization had been abandoned; the desire of excelling in any virtuous undertaking given up; and the country had stood still. But Young Bengal has caught a new fire from his enlightened conquerors—a thirst for knowledge. The youths of Calcutta have become half English—English in everything, personal habits excepted. The love of superstitious observances has given way to a love of books; men of wealth and influence have collected respectable libraries of choice English authors; and the fashion of the metropolis is spreading out every day into the country.

Perhaps Young Bengal has become too much of an English student. It is asserted by many that his ambition to become an English scholar has almost acquired an unpatriotic stretch. Certain it is that he has preferred the wide-spread and polished literature of Britain to that of Bengal, and it has even been asserted that hardly fifty, out of every hundred, can read their own vernacular with the same facility that they read English books. But we doubt if this merits the animadversion which it has so plentifully received. We, for our part, are certainly not prepared to deprecate the taste that has preferred Addison, Milton, and Bacon, to the Chundee, the Bidyá Soondar, and the Mádharma Málati. The endeavour to assimilate the literature of a country like India, which, sooth to say, has no popular literature of its own, with the literature of such civilised quarters of the globe as Britain or France, in preference to

creating a new literature for it, which, when refined to its extremest polish, would not, in all probability, surpass that of Burnah, China or Japan, can hardly be set down as unpatriotic in its more enlarged sense. It is all very well to speak of rescuing the language of the country from contempt, and refining it, and making it worthy of a rising people. But it is not quite so easy to raise and refine a language, hitherto common only to fishermen and shopkeepers, and adapt it to literary purposes, as all that parrot-cry would wish us to suppose. Almost every district has a separate dialect, at least has a dissimilar standard of orthography and pronunciation, which, to rectify and make uniform, will require a not inconsiderable degree of exertion.

But perhaps the best argument against the policy of wasting time in the cultivation of the Bengalee language, is an appeal to the consequences its acquirement, almost invariably, leads to. Young Bengal, as has been mentioned before, is subdivided into two sections, the moral and the immoral, the educated and the uneducated. Will it be believed when we assert, that it is for the most part in the second grade that we are to seek for the proficient in indigenous literature? The effects produced by the representation of Schiller's Tragedy of the Robbers, on the scholars of the school of Fribourg, led, we read, to the resolution of forming a gang of robbers, like those represented in the play, in the forests of Bohemia, and the conspiracy was only accidentally discovered on the

eve of its execution. So the perusal of the Bidyá Gondar, the Rasa Munjoree, the Adeeros, the Retimunjoree, and other works of like character, has certainly not failed to give many a rake to the world. It would be no argument to urge, that the productions of the native press have better specimens also to show. Few, very few indeed, are there of better character. The Rev. Mr. Long has indeed, with great zeal, given us a long list of Bengalee books, containing the names of about 700 works of every variety and character. But of these nearly half are Missionary tracts, and the rest, though classed by the Reverend compiler as "histories," "moral scriptures," "poetry," "tales," and so forth, are, for the most part, extravagant fables, dressed in the favorite, dirty style of the land, which even their admirers dare not certify to be of unexceptionable character. Those that depict not the corruptions of men, record the lewd fables of the gods, and are just as bad in their tendency as the others. Those that neither do the one nor the other, are generally recent compilations, for the most part translations of English authors most brutally murdered. No one reads these vapid productions. They do more injury than benefit to the cause of improvement, by sharpening the popular avidity for dirtier morsels.

The country is full of intellect. It were absurd to dispute or deny it. There is not a single heathen region on the face of the world, wherein, in its palmiest tunc, more proofs of vigorous intellect have been

displayed than in this. Great powers of mind have been evinced here even from the earliest days of antiquity; nor can they be said to have disappeared now altogether from lapse of time. They have undoubtedly been weakened. False religion had given them a wrong impetus; misrule and oppression had attempted to crush them down. But better days have dawned on India. Tyranny has passed away, and it is only necessary to withdraw the present generation from the influence of a corrupt religion, to ensure the resuscitation of worth and intelligence. Then leave them not to their native literature. It is that literature, interwoven with the lewd fables of a mis-called religion, that has perpetuated the thralldom of ignorance so long. Better for them, better for the country, shall be the introduction of a foreign tongue. Who wants them to learn Bengalee? Their friends? Are those friends aware that even the nursery songs and tales in the language are not choice in their expressions; that profligacy of speech is learnt long before children can have any idea of the notions couched in the words they use? Even the native press, established after, and in imitation of, the English press, has not yet been able to attain a respectable character; all the newspapers emanating from it, except those conducted by the Missionaries, being, more or less, servile, low and indecent. You cannot eradicate impurity from the language without sacrificing it altogether. Why hesitate to make the sacrifice? The partiality of Young Bengal for the English language,

therefore, is only an earnest of greater improvement. If indigenous stimuluses are poisons, how is he to blame for having preferred a foreign cordial?

We do not intend to be understood as sneering at the efforts made to raise the character and usefulness of the Bengalee language, by Missionaries and other gentlemen. We only differ very much from them in the estimate they have formed of the Bengalee's love for his own national literature. Because there are books at all in the Bengalee language, written by Bengalees, and read by them, they have jumped at once to the conclusion that the populace love the existing literature, and it should be improved. But the fact alluded to by them, does not indicate what they would wish us to believe, that the Bengalee likes his own language best. He knows the language and he reads it. The public of Bengal is a reading public, if reading aloud and stupidly as they do, can be called such. But they have at all times been found more ready to prefer foreign languages to their own, and even to accept them as better mediums of instruction. The educated classes read the Persian and the Arabic when English literature was unknown to them, and now they read and speak the English tongue; and the poor would be glad to imitate them, had they the same facilities of doing so. It is as impossible as unwise, now to alienate the educated classes from the taste they have acquired, and to give the uneducated classes the same bent, though it might be difficult, is not impracticable. Whether the two classes should

have the nomination of candidates, the subordinate representatives of the ruling power, are, for the most part, afraid of, or averse to recommend such as, by their superior knowledge and merit, have raised themselves to distinction. Many of them are fearful of placing themselves in too invidious a contrast with such men. Some find them too independent to make good subordinates, others affect to consider that the peculiar nature of their education renders them unfit for office drudgery, others again gravely suggest that lettered inexperience requires to be tempered by time before it can be safely introduced into actual practice—all specious arguments, which, even those who use them, know to be dishonest, but which they are nevertheless compelled to use in preference to that true reason which they dare not avow. Surely Young Bengal has made very great intellectual progress indeed, to be an object of jealousy to such men. The consequence of this inimical feeling is, that the subordinate officers of Government consist, almost entirely, of individuals hardened in prejudice and ignorance, and having the only qualification of being at all times ready to flatter the follies and foibles of their superiors, nay, even to pander to their vices. But there is policy in it. At the same time that it distances every idea of competition, it gives a handle to every pseudo friend of India to launch out his tirade against native efficiency and character. If these remarks appear to be of a very caustic character, the fault lies entirely with those who have ren-

dered allusion to the unpleasant truth necessary. Men who are insensible to the call of duty, deserve to be exposed to the censures of public opinion.

Against the native youth it might at the same time be justly urged, why will they be clerks and copyists, instead of being independent laborers? Is there no sphere of usefulness except the service of Government? Why not be the plodding, industrious and frugal tradesman? Artists are in great demand in all the great cities of India. Industrious and steady adventurers from Europe, by the labor of a few years, always scrape together a decent competence, and often return to the mother-country with enviable fortunes. Even the less intelligent and less skillful emigrants from China realize with ease wealth sufficient to place them and their children in independent circumstances. Why not become a carpenter, a coach-builder, or an architect? The training would require little or no expense. There are European tradesmen in the country who would be glad to take gratuitous apprentices, so they could be certain of them for a fixed time, merely for the profit of their exertions. They are jealous indeed of rivals in trade, and the intrusion of strangers, who aspire to the craft, is not always palatable to them. But when the benefit is reciprocal the jealousy ceases. At this moment, also, they are too proud of the prestige of their present superiority, to entertain an idea of native competition, and for many years to come, would hardly think that rivalry worth attending to. A little

good sense and steady application will enable the apprentice to ingratiate himself into his master's favor, and lay the foundations of his future fortune. When he fully understands his business, he would be coveted by his master as a paid servant, and would soon be in a condition to save something from his income. His position might be considered low up to this time, but his prospects will have already become cheering. When industry and economy have sufficiently enlarged his little savings, he can set up for himself, and, having cheaper labor at command than his master, he will do so with advantage. His condition will no longer be stationary, for his progress will henceforth depend entirely on his own personal exertions ; and there are no dreams of ambition which success in business might not enable him to realize.

Agriculture also, holds out to Young Bengal as good a field for exertion as the trades. We need not speak here at all of its vast importance with respect to the improvement and welfare of the country. Our business with it, at present, is only to examine it as a remunerative occupation. The cultivation of the soil is now exclusively in very ignorant hands, and is conducted with borrowed capital. How few are there in the country who plough and reap on their own independent funds ! Men of superior intelligence can very easily improve upon the plan. The introduction of improved implements of husbandry would cheapen labour, and a discreet adjustment of crops would make that labour more productive ; and

Young Bengal being more independent in his character, and more provident in his habits, than the present farmers of the land, would be able to increase his capital year by year, and extend his business, instead of running into debt. Industry and economy are sure at the end to meet with their reward ; and the field is so extensive that there is no likelihood of the number of hands engaged in the occupation making it unprofitable. In mechanical labors, British and half-caste tradesmen might vie with native youths on more advantageous grounds, but the ideas, habits and constitution of the latter, being more congenial to the climate, will give them an advantage over all foreign competitors in the cultivation of the soil. .

But unfortunately Young Bengal, like his more bigotted countrymen, has a prejudice against husbandry and the trades—a remnant of the prejudices of caste. Caste dogmas have indeed sufficiently melted down to render Bráhmans and shop-keepers fellow-students and friends. Go to any of the schools of Calcutta, and you will see the children of Bráhmans, Vaidyas and Kâyasthas associating and studying with the children of carpenters and tradesmen of the lowest orders, and yet the occupations of those orders are not to be adopted. Manual trades and callings are considered less respectable than *keranydom*, on account of these prejudices. Old Bengal is of this opinion on the authority of Menu and Vyasa, which he respects. The rising generation spurn the authority, but retain the prejudice. This is very preposter-

ous. If it were only to prove the sincerity of their conviction and the strength of their understanding, the youths of India should adopt the principle they admit, and adhere to it steadily. Nay, even apart from that, for sensible men to prefer copying papers and transcribing accounts, which do not exercise the mind at all, on the ground of respectability, to labor and skill in business which have the ulterior object of promoting the welfare of the country, is absurd. In India, wealth and respectability are synonymous terms. The rapid succession of properties and families in the country proves it; and the rich men of the day are the descendants of poor and unknown grandfathers. Even were it not so, independence in all countries is more respectable than subordination. "Without it," says Junius, "no man can be happy or even honest." We will not go so far as to question the goodness of the Creator, or to stigmatize human integrity by admitting the full force of the argument; but surely human happiness, and even honesty, or at least what the world calls such, would be all the more secure for a little solid pecuniary independence; and where, in what part of the world, has the position of a pensioned placeman ever secured it more quickly and thoroughly than the pursuit of trade and agriculture? The copyist, from the commencement of his career, when through the influence of friends, or by bowing and cringing, he obtains a place, to the end of his long service, when by good sense and parsimony he has scraped together a humble competence, is ever subject

to the will and caprice of masters, often silly, saucy and harsh, so as to weary out patience herself to a premature end, and not unfrequently so ignorant as to make service under them quite impracticable. Such would not be the life of the tradesman and the agriculturist. These, as soon as their noviciate is over, would be their own masters. They would enjoy unrestricted liberty, and be no longer subject to the whim and caprice of the ignorant, nor bound to endure the haughty look or the scornful eye. Then again the ultimate aim and end of a copyist's exertions is to secure, at his journey's end, a pension of 25 or 30 Rupees per month, on which to live, and which is to constitute the only provision for his family, when age and infirmity shall compel him to strike work. The tradesman and the farmer would have much brighter prospects than this. Successful business, in the ordinary course of events, would furnish them with a more liberal retiring annuity, an annuity which would continue from father to son, even to the third and fourth generation, being based on an independent stock.

The path of usefulness and independence lies open to Young Bengal. If he chooses to degrade himself notwithstanding, of course no one can help him. But his reasoning is generally distinguished by common sense and reflection, and if he would duly act up to its dictum, all men would respect him the more for it. It is true indeed, that the circumstances of many hardly allow of their acting up to their individual impressions and convictions. But even such have it

in their power to direct aright the course of improvement, if they will only exert themselves accordingly. If some of the rising generation are too old already to commence life anew, forsaking the course they have taken, they have yet this in their power, not to repeat the error of their ways in their brothers and children. You have attained a height from which, at your age, you cannot descend, (we would say to them,) you cannot resume your scrip and staff to set out afresh on the journey of life. Well, be it so. But you have the direction of other minds. Take heed how you lead them. Enough of cheap copyists have you given to the Government. Hold ! For your own sakes, and the sake of your country, give no more ! For your country you have a task to perform, a duty to accomplish, and an end to attain. You are the especial and consecrated agents raised up by Providence, not by accident, for meeting the exigencies of the times, for aiding in the accomplishment of great and permanent benefits, for helping in the destruction of vast and dominant evils. Even if you hearken not to the calls of your country, your own family interests require you to be wary. Fathers, you owe a higher duty to your children than to wish them to tread in the path you are treading ! Anticipate the feelings they must feel, if so directed, by your own. You support a large and increasing family, but your income has not increased. Your wish for an independent competence has not been realized, nay, you are often galled by your necessities and

wants. Take heed then, when you have it left to yourselves to choose, what course you select for your children. You are respected and loved amongst your own community, but the man you are subordinate to, dressed in his little brief authority, looks down upon you with contempt. You feel the indignity, your mind is in constant distress, for you cannot retort scorn for scorn. And you have children. Remember the smartings you feel when you think of training them for the life you lead. Train them rather for occupations which, by the time their expenses increase, will yield them an hourly increasing income, and which will make them happy by making them independent. Ye are the hope of India ! Not the metropolis alone, but the whole country requires your usefulness, and promises amply to repay every well-directed exertion. Tradesmen are wanted for every city and town in India, farmers for every village. The objections against the life unfolded to you are merely ideal. Examine them with your ordinary judgment, and they will melt away.

No extraordinary talents are wanted in the lines of business to which we have alluded : and they are open to all. People who have never tried can have no idea of the immense difficulty which even clever men have in entering the Government service, particularly such as are compelled to rely on their own exertions. They have often the unpleasant alternative of seeing their applications cruelly re-

pulsed, while men of considerably inferior pretensions are preferred to them. This bitter alternative occurs not to the mechanic and the laborer; and at the same time the qualifications required of them are lighter and more easily attained. A good acquaintance with common arithmetic, and an ordinary knowledge of the English and native languages, are all the literary accomplishments absolutely necessary, and a little cursory knowledge of geography and history might also be added, to place the native quite on a par with his European competitors. Habits of usefulness however will be plentifully required, and the sloth and indolence of the native character must be entirely given up. To rise early and work late are essential to the workman who would eat the bread of honest labor, and leave to his children the savings of carefulness. Industry, frugality and perseverance are indispensable to his mode of life. Why does not a Hindu tradesman get on? Why is a Hindu farmer always in debt? They never labor when they can help it. If they would only exert themselves for five or six hours every day, they could make themselves perfectly independent of want or debt. But this they never will. They take to themselves as much holiday as they can, and no wonder they continue needy in the midst of abundance. There is no royal road to wealth, any more than there is to knowledge. Who wishes for the ease and repose of wealth must gain them by the sweat of his brow. It is a purchase that must be made—made with application, patience and in-

dustry. This is the most important of all lessons for Hindu youths to learn. On it depend everything,—health, happiness, opulence, respectability, usefulness, existence itself. There is absolutely no hope for the country independent of it. The youths of Bengal have copied English manners well, but the excellent habits of the British tradesman must also, likewise, be imitated. They have adopted the language and embraced the feelings and ideas of Englishmen ; to make the imitation practically as productive as the original, they must essay to imitate also, as far as their feebler make and constitution will allow it, the English avidity for labor.

But because great literary acquirements are not necessary in rendering opulence and respectability of easy acquirement, we do not mean that their cultivation should be neglected. By no means. The object of education is to develop and discipline the mental faculties, to form habits of accurate thinking, to store the mind with a general knowledge of human nature, to fortify and elevate the character by moral discipline ; and these are indispensable to all men, however the occupations of some might not require them. If Young Bengal is in uprightness, fidelity and truth, superior to his ancestors, he owes it entirely to the culture of European education, from which he has imbibed ideas which exist not in the storehouse of Oriental learning. A knowledge of the English language is certainly not to be considered as a standard of individual excellence ; but it throws open every avenue

truth and rectitude, and the best specimens of the Young Bengal class are certainly to be found amongst those who have cultivated it well. Whether it should be taught exclusively, or not, is a discussion that does not come within the scope of our subject, but this it might be pertinent to observe, that, while the cultivation of native literature and language has only fed the young mind with falsehoods and prejudices, from the cultivation of European literature and language have been imbibed all the sound notions now being gradually diffused throughout the land. The orthodox native notions about the origin, age, chronology and history of the earth; their ideas of astronomy, ethics and metaphysics; even their notions of human responsibility, of right and wrong, of heaven and hell, are not only erroneous, but fraught with injurious tendencies: and the only antidote against the evil they engender is their entire and utter renunciation. As a preventive against evil, therefore, if from no higher motive, English must be learnt, and learnt well.

There are, besides trade and agriculture, other spheres of usefulness also for Young Bengal, in which a good knowledge of the English language is indispensable. The establishment of the Medical College in Calcutta has thrown open one such to the native youth, and we are glad to see that it has been availed of in a proper manner. Good medical students have issued from its walls, benefiting alike the country and themselves. All the sepoy regiments have secured efficient native doctors; and the civil stations

and notable cities throughout the Presidency have received cheap medical practitioners ; who in no other sphere of action, to which the native mind has yet attached itself, could have possibly amassed the independence, which, though young men, they have already acquired, even in spite of the prejudices yet entertained by the bulk of the nation, against medicines not indigenous, and modes of treatment not laid down in the Ayoor Ved. A large income is the certain reward of eminence in medical knowledge, particularly when combined with an excellent mastery of the English tongue ; and, as we have mentioned already,* most of our young Hindu practitioners have secured it very early in life, in advance, as it were, for the foreseen usefulness of their future career. Many students of the College are known to have declined Government employment,—a sure sign that their profession is lucrative, independent of State countenance ; and there is not one amongst them who has not obtained an honorable and easy livelihood ; which cannot be said of those of their friends and kin who have stuck fast to clerkship. The *Friend of India*, in October 1852, mentioned that one native doctor in Calcutta made nearly 2,000 Rupees a month, by private practice, and that one or two others realized incomes fully equal to those of the average of Civil Surgeons. Quoting the *Bombay Telegraph and Courier*, it also stated, that at Bombay too, the graduates of the Grant Medical College were thriving on private practice, and one was making from 500 to 1,000 Rupees a month.

Young Bengal might also be profitably trained up in the law, for which Hindus generally have very great natural aptitude ; and in this too a good English education is indispensable. For our own part we dislike the pettifogging trade, which teaches people to pick pockets under the sanction of justice. It is lucrative, but appears to us to be rather living on the abuses of life ; and we fear, lawyers naturally acquire the habit of fomenting disputes amongst neighbours, that their business may not slack ; like the tooth-drawer, as Hudibras has it, who maintains his own teeth in constant eating by pulling out those of other men. The profession too is not quite fairly open to the natives yet—we mean so far as practice in her Majesty's Courts is concerned. The calling of an advocate is as systematically guarded from out-door aspirants, as places in the Civil Service. The Bar is inaccessible, and the only step which natives are eligible to, appears to be that of Attornies, to which more than one have already been admitted.

Distinguished by his superior elevation from the mass around him, Young Bengal has challenged greater scrutiny in his conduct and affairs than the rest of the community. His life, and the feelings by which it is regulated, have been minutely examined, sometimes by unprejudiced judges, oftener by spiteful enemies. But he has not suffered by the inquiry. To give him a bad name, indolent vagabonds of the kennels and the gutters have often been designedly pitched upon as specimens of his class, and the dregs

of society dragged forth and dissected. But such unfair proceedings could of course do the real Simon Pure no injury. Enemies more circumspect assert that they have often observed great inconsistencies between his sayings and doings. But these again, we can prove, have overlooked many things which it suited their purpose not to notice, and also seen many things which have no existence but in their dreams. "In thought and theory," they say, "he is liberal enough, but in action he sticks still to the usages of the olden time ; his doings give a lie to his profession ; his conduct is so chameleon-like, that no man can fix upon its color." Ah, but you read only what suits you best, honest Daniel ! Where a less spiteful and less jealous judge would perhaps simply observe, that, the revolutions effected have yet only been done by halves, you detect hypocrisy ; where a lover of gradual progress would define what remains to be done, and point out wise and well-digested means whereby to do it, you come forward with your sneers and sarcasms to decry and declaim. We will give you a better, that is, a more faithful version of the character of Young Bengal, than the one you slightly uphold to the world.

With the advent of Young Bengal the philippics against native profligacy and corruption have ceased. It has been observed, *usque ad nauseam*, by all public journalists, that amongst the uncovenanted officers of Government, especially natives, there has scarcely been a man who did not make his power subservient

to illegal gain and extortion. But who dares apply the remark to Young Bengal? If the hope of securing wealth by an abuse of power has hitherto been the leading motive of natives in the Government service, who shall ^{therefore} ~~aver~~ that the dishonesty continues where Young Bengal has come into power? To the old Hindu, detection in the accumulation of illegal perquisites involved no loss of reputation; for bribery and corruption he was never disgraced in the opinion of his countrymen; if he contrived to amass an independence, no matter how that was secured, he was admired, applauded and envied, never cut for it or condemned; the value of a situation was reckoned, not by its fixed salary, but by the gains it commanded; and as for his own conscience, it was proof against the intrusions of reflection. But a change has passed over the spirit of the times. There is no fraud and extortion now in the Government service, except where members of the old class are still in employ. Young Bengal has imbibed new notions of rectitude from his English education; he has adopted novel opinions about right and wrong, or rather, the sentiments of another people; and we make the assertion with the fullest confidence that will admit of no denial, that, wherever he has been trusted, he has been found fully as competent and honest as the ordinary specimens of the favored service. The incentives held out for his improvement have not been great. The service of the Government supplies the native youth with no

motives for a better display of rectitude and ability than their ancestors had evinced. The pay of uncontracted officers continues nearly as wretched as ever. But conscientious men will discharge their duties properly, whether they do or do not receive an adequate requital; and Young Bengal appreciates the claims of right and duty. This integrity is yet in its infancy, and its infancy has been cradled in corruption. But the same Providence that has watched over its birth, will no doubt watch over its growth and preservation; and the day cannot be far distant, when the children of the soil will be admitted, even by their present enemies, to be fully deserving of confidence and responsibility.

Nor is Young Bengal only a much more honest, but he is also a much more efficient servant than the old Hindu. This must be as a matter of course. Inferior men in every department of life clog and ruin the most excellent machinery, while men of superior parts do credit to the engine they work with, even when imperfect or defective. His enemies indeed are anxious to portray Le Jeune Bengal as an indifferent man of the world; one wedded to his books and his ease; who, for the mysteries of some fascinating third volume, will be apt to neglect his more legitimate business. But this is not the fact. He does indeed read novels and verses; but, when his duty requires it, he studies the state of the money market, and the dry details of the law, with even greater diligence and care. He has as genuine an appetite for business as for

books, and, though but of yesterday, he has already outstripped most of his older competitors even in that which the world calls usefulness. It is now high time that the antiquated notion should be exploded that a reading man is necessarily the less a man of business. You may as well consider the hard drudge, who takes advantage of a holiday to go on a trip for change of air, an idler and a drone. He works quite as steadily and perseveringly as any man, and, bringing a more enlightened and cultivated mind to the business, does much more than ordinary men : nor does he require that constant check and supervision so indispensable in working men of inferior talents. In no case does he spare pains to be of use to his employer, and if even for all this he is not liked and coveted, the secret, we fear, consists in the fact that he is unapt to flatter.

Of the social improvements effected by Young Bengal it is impossible that we can speak in detail, for they are many and minute. Decorous and methodical by disposition, he has for the most part cultivated domestic virtues with greater success than his predecessors. As children, the Hindus have been proverbially dutiful from the remotest times, so that, in that respect, there was not much to improve. But Young Bengal is a more constant husband, and a discreeter parent, than the mass of his countrymen—gainsay it who can. His social position has also altered. The educated native youths are now the most influential-section of the population of Calcutta,

after the European community, and have much outstripped their bigotted brethren of the orthodox class, whom they have signally defeated in several important questions of local utility. In public spirit and in desire of improvement they are much their superiors, and are hardly inferior to them in philanthropy. Their mode of life too has undergone a change. Some of the finest equipages in Calcutta belong to men of the Young Bengal class. They are in imitation of the European model. The most dashing carriages and horses that are to be seen in the evening drives along the Esplanade, belong to young Baboos, whose houses are likewise furnished with chairs, couches, tables and sideboards, after the European manner. Their costume also, is, for the most part, much more elegant than that of the old school, except where the European imitation is too close, when, we must say, it looks more ridiculous than neat. The poorer portion of the class, however, still dress in the old fashion; and the undress of all classes continues to be the same. In their within-door-life, in fact, the changes have not yet been so great as the external improvements noticed would lead us to suppose. The trammels of caste, though thoroughly despised by them all, are yet ostensibly observed by many at home. Even those whose out-of-door life approaches nearest to the Anglo-Saxon style, live very much like old Bengalees beside the domestic hearth. This they are in fact obliged to do. By a different course they would not only lose their respect

in society, but likewise their influence with neighbours and relations; and English society being systematically barred against them, the commonest motives of prudence and caution forbid their risking the loss.

Many pernicious old customs however have been done away with by Young Bengal, and, among others, we should here prominently mention the custom of fostering laziness by a mistaken hospitality. According to the good old practice of the country, indolent drones, too idle to labor, and too proud to beg, have always been suffered to waste the substance of a plentiful hive. Especially members of the better section of the community, not having the freedom to betake themselves to every sort of business, have always, without much shyness or hesitation, sought, first a night's quarter, and then, a perpetual lodgment at the house of relatives, who, by such intrusion, have been constrained to support them so long as they chose to stay, which was often till they obtained employment suited to their rank and caste, or, not obtaining it, till death terminated their long career of idleness. This was a monstrous load to the industrious, and it was likewise a national calamity, for a very large proportion of the population were thus systematically indolent. All felt the evil; but none had the courage to act against it. Young Bengal is the only man who has yet been able, boldly and without fear of derision, to tell his needy relatives—"Every one for himself, and God for us all. You must depend for existence on your own labors. I cannot support you—work or starve." He

is not indifferent to the calls of adversity, sickness and age. When the hollow-hearted support of the world has failed, he has been a staff unto the infirm and the poor. But he has nothing to afford to the indolent. How much the general adoption of this economical principle will serve the interests of the country the reader will fully appreciate. Mortified pride and vanity, compelled to work, will no doubt for a time be heard to complain; but they will learn to live and thrive, and be healthy on their own labor, and in an utilitarian and money-seeking age, like the present, even they will not grudge it long, when they find how little it costs a man to live at ease, and how productive is human exertion.

We have praised Young Bengal lavishly, for we are anxious to encourage him. But a little castigation will not be thrown away. There are defects in his character which require to be pointed out, that they might be amended. In some of the schools and colleges in Calcutta the education imparted is so respectable, that the show-students of the institutions are, we were about to say, often nearly as good specimens of scholastic excellence, in their way, as ever Eton or Rugby gave out. But, whether it be on account of the possession of an excellence so rare in the country, or from a fondness for ostentation, we know not, but many of these young men are said to be exceedingly conceited and arrogant, and give themselves airs quite unbecoming the modesty of scholars. In their anxiety to display their zeal for national ameli-

oration, they often exhibit such absurd affectation, as to remind a cynic observer, of Gay's monkey that would reform the world. Youth and extravagant opinions about self, however, naturally go together; the no-exception test would be too strict for poor humanity; and their enemies may take that as an excuse, so long as the absence of reform should render an excuse necessary.

Our next charge against Young Bengal shall be that he has ~~no~~ religion; and this we say even of the best. Some are deists after Hume and Gibbon; a few, we believe, are Unitarian Christians on principle, but unbaptized; many are Vedantists: but of the bulk it may safely be affirmed, that they have foresworn an old faith, but ~~have~~ "not had time" to get a new one. This is very much to be regretted: but we are not prepared to condemn them so very strongly for it, as the fashion of the times requires. Every man is not necessarily an infidel, as in common parlance he is supposed to be, who is not wedded to a creed by name. We judge leniently of those whose lives give evidence of piety; and, as times go, the youths of India are not very deficient in morals. For the most part they restrain themselves well from the indulgence of evil propensities, and are quite alive to the truth—"Thou God seest me;" and the object of moral science being answered, we bear them no further grudge. We do not say that the acceptance of Christianity would not do them still greater good. We only affirm that their morals, such as they are, are rare

for the country, and do not appear to disadvantage when contrasted with those of the youths of other lands. Some indeed there are who betray the most egregious contradictions in their modes of life. It is not even uncommon to find such as in the morning read "The Innocent Adultery," and in the evening deliver lectures at the Bethune Society on the "Whole Duty of Man." But this occurs all over the world, and proves nothing more than this, that they are not superior to the ordinary run of mankind. As, however, there is a disreputable section of the class who have received no adequate training, or have not profited by such training as they have passed through, the absence of a religion for the mass is felt as a great disadvantage.

Their contempt for everything national is also reckoned by their enemies in the light of a charge against their character, and we have often heard an old adage endeavoured to be applied to them sneeringly, that "It is a bad bird that fouls its own nest." There are some shallow-minded people who love old sayings so well, that they will stake all their credit for judgment and discretion on a stale maxim, because, forsooth, it has acquired the sanction of time; and they will twist and turn it in the most absurd manner, to apply it to some subject which they are determined to deride, but to which, beyond that determination of their own, the proverb itself has no affinity. That bird may be bad indeed which fouls its own nest. But it is not quite so apparent that every reformer can

with reason be likened to it ; and if they had been so likened and ridiculed in other parts of the world, as they are in this, it is certain progress and civilization would not have benefited thereby. Institutions which regard the human race as only a body of idiots, which for ages have insulted with falsehoods the public judgment, are no more worthy of being prized for being national, than a scoundrel is to be esteemed for being a relative. For our part we do not consider this charge at all well-founded. We cannot, however, entirely overlook the fact, that, in many cases, the defection from Hinduism complained of, is not suggested from motives of reform, and then of course, the dirty bird has nothing to excuse him.

This leads us to examine into the character of those of the Young Bengal class, who, by their conduct, have reflected so much discredit on the whole body, and whom at the outset we promised to notice. This section of the order, (by no means a small one,) is composed of those of the native youths, who, under the plea of reform, seek excitement, or plead the good plea to excuse bad habits previously acquired. Bankrupts in character, from the shameless pursuit of sensual pleasures, they affect devotion to the regeneration of the country as the best cloak to hide the deficiencies of their moral conduct. They are patriots ; but their patriotism consists only in a dignified disdain of authority. They affect to feel within themselves the promptings of an exalted genius, and of aspiring abilities, confined, alas ! within a narrow sphere by cir-

cumstances or misfortune. They are first-rate talkers, and make long orations with a prodigious flow of words, which might have extinguished the eloquence of Burke and Chatham ; and they speak of the Police and the Land Revenue with an ease and positiveness which the cleverest men in the administration might envy. Their dreams by night are of sceptres and thrones achieved by their own talents, and their waking thoughts are of chained eagles and imprisoned lions. But that which they are best characterized by, is a degree of excess not only hurtful to morals, but unfriendly to life. Day after day they follow the same career of dissipation and disorder, revelling in the stews and pandemoniums of Calcutta, restrained by no scruple, and devoid of truth or shame. And thus they go on, till exhausted nature avenges the outrage, and, martyrs to their love of pleasure, they meet untimely death. Moral principles they have none ; neither honesty, nor truth, nor purity ; but if you scoff and sneer at them, they will acknowledge no embarrassment, for they affect to be the Alcibiadeses and Cæsars of India, her Pymys, Bolingbrokes, and Mirabeaus. And yet for all such pretensions their progress in letters is generally very slender. Very few of them know to read and write. Perhaps not one of them can pen a decent English letter. Having, however, the same opportunities to talk English as their betters, or rather, the absence of opportunities to cultivate English conversation being common to both sections, their tact in this is nearly on a par with that of

their more learned brethren, and we believe, we owe to this the fact of their being so frequently confounded together. They have also much daring boldness in their character, though not that independence which is a test of merit. They are bold like fools, as contrasted with angels, thrusting themselves everywhere into notice, and winning by servility where effrontery is repulsed. They cringe and flatter quite as easily as they intrude, and over and above all this, they are expert in eating beef and drinking wine. As this latter habit is very much fostered by European encouragement, we would fain say a word upon it. That in eating there should be no prejudices, even Hindus are beginning to admit as an axiomatic truth; and the prejudices against beef and wine, as forbidden articles of food, are now confined only among bigots of the orthodox class. But why should people forget that beef and wine are aliments too rich for a climate so warm as this? Many Europeans, habituated to them in their own country, abstain from them wholly or partially, according to their constitution and health, while residing in this land of the sun, and many have ruined their health by not doing so; and have not the natives yet discovered that all their hard drinkers have proved short-lived? We have it in the Gospel of Luke, that Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, told unto Zacharias, that his son John "shall be great in the sight of God? and shall drink *neither wine nor strong drink.*" We also know that the primitive patriarchs lived only on nourishing herbs and fruits, and the

records of all nations show that they lived long. Human life began afterwards gradually to shorten, we believe, as vegetable food began to make room for carcases, and simple drink for intoxicating liquors.

But we must have done speaking of the *scape-graces* of the class. Our business for the present being rather with those whom we have named the "Hopes of India," the reverse picture must not unduly detain us. Even these, for all the lavish praises we have conferred on them, are not to be considered as anything beyond imitations of Anglo-Saxon models of character and talent. The efforts made to promote the education of the native youth and enlighten the country, could not fail to exalt the European character in the estimation of the rising race, and this, as a matter of course, early generated a rage for imitation. To what extent this strong tendency has developed itself, we have endeavoured to show. The successful and unservile imitations are yet few, but, looming in the distance, we already discern a long and numerous procession for future years, and we do not despair that they will eventually give the tone throughout the country, as railways and electric telegraphs bring its remotest confines within easy reach of the refinements of Calcutta, and, blessed by God, be themselves a blessing. To borrow a simile from Mr. Macauley, the seven sleepers of the legend who closed their eyes when the Pagans were persecuting the Christians, and woke when the Christians were persecuting the Pagans, did not find themselves in a world more com-

pletely new to them, than, about fifty years hence, at the present rate of progress, will be the moral and intellectual aspect of British India.

We have named the rising generation of natives the "Hopes of India." The reader will therefore expect that we should explain explicitly what we hope from them. Do you expect that they will achieve the freedom of the country? No, gentle reader, not so much. We indeed are not converts to the dogma that the Hindu mind is entirely deficient in the loftier sentiments of patriotism, nor are we blind to the fact that, as in every thing else, in courage and boldness also, Young Bengal has attained a haughtier cast than had ever been noticed in the cowed servility of his predecessors. The day is now gone by when a Hindu could be struck, even by an Englishman, with impunity. We have ourselves, more than once, seen the blow instantly returned. But, for all that, the bravery of Young Bengal, if it can be named such, is of a quiet and defensive character only. He has not the aggressive martial spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race, and he is yet too weak to stand up for his freedom. He is deficient in personal strength, which, for a body, is the principal staple of courage; and he is also, for the most part, quite unaccustomed to the use of arms, the only accomplishment that might make up for a deficiency in personal powers; and personal and political strength, if not the same, are nearly allied. Even if he could strike for his independence, and secure it, it is very doubtful that he could retain it long. There is a

*softness and mildness in the Hindu character, not unpleasing in itself, but rather inimicable to political freedom; and we have too high a respect for Hindu discretion to suspect, even for a moment, that it would prefer the thralldom of the Afghans, or the Russians, or a state of anarchy, to the rule of Britain. If Astræa has not yet left her last footsteps on the earth, we have every right rather to expect that the native youth are eminently attached to the British rule, though an exposition of their gratitude, or even a proper acknowledgment of their obligations, might be rather difficult to find. For our own part, we believe that feelings of steady loyalty and attachment are cordially felt, by most of them, towards the British Government. Societies and associations *ad infinitum* have indeed been formed, from time to time, in which indignant members have spoken menace and defiance while alluding to the British name, and pourtrayed in vivid colors the treachery, perfidy and aggression, the oppression, extortion and injustice, of the British power. This has afforded a handle to the bitter enemies of the native youth, to decry the loyalty and gratitude of the whole class, while dissecting the ardent philippics of the unwary few. But these associations and meetings have never represented the entire body, and careful thinkers are not the most forward in spouting out their reflections in such assemblies. There are many of the class who are no spouters, who have never proclaimed themselves the enemies of the Government, never spoken of it with disrespect and*

disloyalty, never encouraged the vehement and passionate declamation of others, never entertained a notion of disaffection or revolt ; and why the feelings and opinions of these should not be weighed, before a condemnatory verdict on the whole body is pronounced, we do not pretend to understand. By the unfortunate speeches of a few, Young Bengal has got the credit of being one of the greatest incendiaries that ever applied fire to his neighbour's thatch, and the vehemence with which these few have exposed themselves, has been understood as an evidence of the sincerity of the antipathy of the whole body against the ruling power. But we would still fain believe that Young Bengal is incapable of arson, and is altogether a harmless man. He is guilty of many mistakes and errors ; but he is not a conspirator. He falls into fits of vehemence, and is often satiric and bitter without cause ; but he is essentially loyal at heart, and well attached to that Government under which, for all its occasional backslidings, civilization is making such rapid progress in the land. The rooks settle where the trees are finest ; and that administration cannot be altogether on a wrong tack under which a class like Young Bengal has grown and thrived ; and Young Bengal is too sharp-witted not to have perceived this, and is not so ungrateful as not to appreciate it.

All that we hope to secure from the well-directed exertions and practical philanthropy of the rising community, is an elevation of the national character,

and a resuscitation of intelligence and usefulness throughout the land. Like the cattle of their fields the Hindus grow up, toil and die. We hope to see them grow up and toil as men, appreciating the moral beauty of the creation, and the value of their souls. A hundred opportunities of doing ill, says Zoroaster, occur every day, but the opportunity of doing well seldom comes once in a year. We hope to see Young Bengal repel the myriad temptations to evil, and avail himself of the scanty opportunities to do good, and, by his exertions, render his countrymen amiable, pious and temperate, upright in their conduct, faithful in their dealings, and in their morals straightforward and pure. We hope to see Young Bengal promote the march of civilization and refinement. Comfort and convenience the people have none. Their huts are so miserable, that nothing more so can well be pictured, and their apparel and living are filthy and dirty beyond measure. Much of this is attributable to poverty, quite as much to ignorance. We hope to see Young Bengal light the torch which will dissipate the night's long darkness, and make his nation such as he is, and demonstrate the triumph of knowledge by his own.

Does Government wish to befriend the cause of civilization in the country? A better and surer plan than it could not adopt than befriending the class we have attempted to describe. By employing youths of enlightened and cultivated minds in its service, in such departments respectively, as their various abili-

ties might be best suited to, or as their different inclinations might direct them, it would introduce real improvement amongst all classes of men, besides securing a brilliant staff worthy of its lead. The distribution of scholarships at school, as prizes for literary distinction, is not an instrument of half such efficacy for elevating and keeping up the standard of education amongst boys, as would be the judicious bestowal of offices among those boys, when grown up into men, throughout the country. Many of the ablest natives now refuse to engage in the Government service, because, as at present constituted, it is neither a line of life in itself, nor a stepping-stone to better prospects. The present attractions of emolument, influence and station, are not adequate to reward their deserts, and the country thus loses the benefit of talents which it has a right to command. Nay, worse than that, it gets a substitution of inferior ability for which there was no demand. Instead of men capable of great achievements, when properly directed, it gets men born and bred up in error; and error placed in power but fastens tighter the bands of ignorance. That a contrary and more liberal plan should be adopted by the Government is therefore very plain. A multitude of enlightened native gentlemen, filling every department of the public service, according to the tendency of their characters and talents, must, in the ordinary course of things, lessen the influence of prejudice, and instil the germs of progressive improvement. The character of the

Government would then be best reflected in the conduct of its subordinates, its energy sustained in the smallest wheels of the vast machinery. Gradually this will form an aristocracy of educated minds, an aristocracy of men of good moral character to inspire the mass with respect, and of ability to attract confidence from all classes of the people ; and how much that will benefit the country, where superior talents and rectitude have never before been superiorly elevated, it is unnecessary to dilate upon. We speak advisedly when we assert, that it will be one of the strongest and surest incentives to the general diffusion of knowledge and the maturity of the national character throughout the land ; and a greater hostage of fidelity one nation could not give to another than Young Bengal has already given to the British people, by adopting their ways, habits, literature and language, in preference to those of his own race. Our Government is a wise government, and the proverb says, that a word to the wise is enough. That word has been told. Wisdom and liberality ought to be the leading characteristics of the Indian Government, not the word liberality, but the sterling truth. The Young Bengal party, poor as it is, is still that of movement and progression. It aims after a complete reconstruction of the social fabric. The Government has long perceived the importance and necessity of such a change. It only remains first to purchase over to its aid, without reserve, a well-organised body, which to be useful, requires only to be admitted into power.

To the European community also, who, blinded by prejudice, think Le Jeune Bengal beneath their notice, and often regard the class with a galling assumption of authority, and a marked air of disdain, we would fain address a parting word. You treat them with contempt, rudeness and superciliousness; you stalk away from them with insolent pomposity; your pride and conceit often make you neglect towards them the ordinary courtesies and graces of life. But wherefore? Not that we dispute your right to be proud and uncourteous. But what purpose does it answer? It throws them at a distance, it demoralizes their independence by compelling them to fawn on you. Is that your object? O no, it cannot be, for you are civilized men. If it is, you should know this at least, that those very men, who fawn on you for their interest, despise you most at heart. Shrewd observers as they are, they quickly discover vulgar arrogance, or stolid stupidity, and resent ill manners after their own way, with quiet scorn. A well-behaved Englishman is regarded as a little god amongst them. They endeavour to imitate his character, particularly in all such healthful and regenerating customs as are easily moulded with their habits. The influence of English example alone has made such improvements, as have been effected in the country. But an incarnation of pride is only smiled at behind his back. No one but a madman denies the superiority of English talents and English character, except when Englishmen forget how to conduct themselves, and compromise the national prestige.

If they will only maintain a courteous behaviour, avoid superciliousness and insolent contempt, and in candour admit talents in natives, where such exist, they would not only be valued, courted and envied, but be able to do real service to the country, which their arrogance and presumption now so effectually prevent them from achieving.

Our last words shall be to the young men themselves to whom we have devoted these pages. We have named you the "Hopes of India," for providence has raised you up to be the instruments of Indian civilization. Remember what part your country expects from you. You have no right to eat, drink or sleep, without attempting to mitigate the sorrows of your country, and to ameliorate her condition. The improvement of your fellow mortals, the increase of their knowledge, are reforms which she expects, and has a right to expect, from you. Your exertions principally must effect the social regeneration of the great mass of the country. In all that you do you must seek to be social, that you may leave your countrymen, after your generation, one step forward in morals and refinement. You must therefore, employ your minds above contemptible trivialities. The permanent interests of the soil are not to be served by fits and starts of usefulness. You must serve her on the firm basis of conscientious principles. That you do so now, we will not be so bold as to advance. For all the praise we have lavished upon you, we are far from approving all your sayings and doings. Some of you

are too prominent in your "liberalism" to help the cause of real improvement. But you are all men of education and unquestionable parts, and you have all, we believe, the disposition and the power to do real good. Attend then to the moral improvement of your species. The very idea of your undertaking the work in a body, in a proper spirit will, of itself, be a source of consolation and hope to the true well-wishers of the land ; and, as success attends your exertions, the due meed of reward and praise will not be withheld from you, even by those who now hesitate to acknowledge your usefulness.

VEDANTISM AND THE BRUHMU SUBHÁ.

THE uncertain conclusions which have always resulted from the researches of philosophy, from age to age, have not a little contributed to confirm the notion, that human wisdom alone is utterly unequal to the task of leading men unto truth. From the earliest eras of society, when the intellectual powers of the human mind were yet in their infancy, to the present moment, when it may safely be asserted that they have attained a degree of elevation never reached before, the primary object of all our inquiries has been to acquire a correct knowledge of the origin of things, and, still more especially, of that first intelligent cause to whom all owe their being. And yet, it is a fact, that even the greatest philosophers of the world "by wisdom knew not God." However clear and enlightened might have been their views on other subjects, however shrewd their observations, however vast their capacities, however deep their research, all their efforts to scale Heaven by the ladder of philosophy, all their struggles to peep into the mysteries of God and religion by the simple help of their own unaided

reason, have invariably proved idle and abortive. In vain have the finest talents been brought into play, in vain the wisest principles laid down and arranged; for the finest talents and the wisest principles have never yet succeeded to hit on any rational hypothesis on the subject, and many with Simonides have frankly admitted, that the more they examined the matter, the more obscure it appeared to them. It is in this strain that the Hindu sages too have declared, that God is incomprehensible, undiscoverable and indescribable, not meaning thereby simply, that human intellect cannot form any complete and definite idea of a being so glorious, but that it can form no correct idea of him at all. Undeterred by their own admission, however, they yet ventured boldly and far into their investigations, and the results of their researches have been handed down to their descendents, in the shape of so many philosophical systems of theology, as the records of at once the wisdom and the piety of their forefathers. But, like all other philosophical theories of religion, these too are radically unsound and imperfect; and though here and there containing sublime conceptions of the Deity, much too vague, speculative and metaphysical on the whole, to be adapted to the comprehension, the wants, and the nature of mankind, and by far too uncertain and insufficient to answer any purpose of salvation.

Of all the systems of Hindu theology, the religion of the Vedānta is certainly the most sublime, at the same time that it is believed to be the most orthodox,

that is, the most agreeable to the Veds. Its antiquity has been variously estimated. Vyasa is generally acknowledged to have been its founder, and his Sutras, the well-known Vedánta Durshun, its code of authority. The term "Vedánta," says the author of the Vedánta Sára, "applies to such arguments as are taken from the Upanishads, to the Sáririka Sutras, and to other similar Shástras which tend to the same end ;" and in Ward's work of the same name, which, though evidently not a correct version of the original, embodies all the popular notions on the subject, the tenets are stated to have been derived from the discourse addressed by Krishna to Arjun, in the Mahábhárut, to induce him to lay aside his scruples, when, on the eve of battle, he hesitated to engage in a war in which he found his friends, preceptors and relatives arrayed against him. But the doctrines of the Mahábhárut, including that portion of it which is called the Gitá, and which is looked upon by most of the Vedantists as a work of great authority, being an exposition of the Vedánta system, as taught by Krishna to his disciple, are not invariably consonant to those entertained in the Sáririka Sutras ; and this, perhaps, at once nullifies the derivation attributed to the latter by Ward. It will not however, at all disturb the notion that Vyasa is the author of those Sutras, since the recognised author of the Mahábhárut is also widely reputed as the compiler of the Veds ; and it is not irrational to believe, that, in arranging the scriptures, he was led to compose a treatise on

their doctrines, or rather on that portion of their doctrines, of which he approved. But when did the author of the *Mahábhárut* live? The date of the "great war," which his great poem records, has been assumed by scholars, to be some twelve or fourteen hundred years before the Christian era. If Vyasa, therefore, was contemporaneous to the fight he has immortalized, the age of the Vedánta may now fairly be estimated at above three thousand years. According to some of the mythic accounts however, Vyasa is stated to have lived in the Dwapur Yuga, and the events celebrated in his poem to have taken place in the Kali Yuga, our own age of iron. One account even goes to assure us that Dhratarástra and Pándu, the fathers of the contending factions of the *Mahábhárut*, were the children of Vyasa by his brother's widow. The inconsistency of supposing an author's having lived before the occurrence of the events he has recorded, is, in both cases, explained by supposing a miracle; that is, that Vyasa wrote by inspiration.

The origin of the belief in one God in India, as understood in the Vedánta, must however have been prior even to the age of Vyasa. The Upanishads, the principal authorities of the system, are evidently works of earlier date, and, besides the *rishees* who composed them, Ikshwaku, Vashishta, Púrsára and others, maintained the doctrines of the Vedánta before Vyasa was born. But the full development of the system was of later growth. Neither the authors of the Upanishads, nor any of the other sages who pro-

fessed the same doctrines, could reduce them to one philosophical and connected theory; and the compiler of the Veds appears to have been the first to systematize the misty dreams of his predecessors, and promulgate them with success. The reasons for compiling the Sáririka Sūtras are thus summed up in the work translated by Ward: "To humble Kakootsthu, a king of the race of the sun, who was intoxicated with an idea of his own wisdom, to point out that the knowledge of Bruhmu is the only certain way of obtaining liberation, instead of the severe mortifications of former yoogus, which mankind are at present incapable of performing, and to destroy among men attachment to works of merit, since, so long as a desire of reward remaineth, men can never be delivered from liability to future birth ;"—to answer these ends was the Vedānta composed. It appears very probable, that, at this time, idolatry was extensively prevalent in the country, and that the annihilation of its puerile doctrines was the chief object Vyasa had in view in compiling his Sūtras.* Nag, the pains taken by the philosopher to disprove divers heretical and unorthodox doctrines alluded to

* To this it may be objected that the same Vyasa is stated to have likewise composed the Mahā Purāṇs, which treat of the genealogies and exploits of gods, demi-gods, and heroes ; but the objection will not be a powerful one, as in doing so, he merely compiled the vulgar belief. He was an indefatigable compiler, and won his surname, "Vyasa," by giving to all forms of religion prevalent in India, at the age he lived in, a local habitation and a name.

in his work, almost establish his motive beyond doubt. But even at that early age, idolatry was too strong in the land to be combated with directly, far less to be put down. Vyasa therefore, did all that a sensible man can be expected to do under such circumstances. He took all the unexceptionable parts of the Veds together, and compiled a compendious abstract, or rather a catalogue of proofs respecting theology, which he called the "resolution," or, as Sir W. Jones interpreted the term Vedānta, "the end and scope" of the whole scriptures. He could not deny to idolatry its pretensions to divine authority, for his own theory had with idolatry a common basis, and to deny the claims of the one were to break down those of the other. But he greatly exalted his faith over the current popular notions of religion, called one the creed of the wise, and the others those of the ignorant, and then left it to the choice of his readers to embrace whichever doctrine they preferred. It is certainly not to be doubted that his efforts greatly succeeded. His disciples were many, and their disciples again were a still more numerous body. But there were nevertheless subsequent relapses into idolatry, and we find Sancarācharjya, in the 9th century after Christ, once more refuting the vulgar tenets, and recalling attention to the principles of the Vedānta. Since then, the Vedānta has been constantly read and taught all over India by the learned, and being the best system of religion in the country, appears always to have reckoned the more respectable portion of the commu-

nity as its proselytes. Almost all our *pundits*, and the better section of our *dundees* and *sunyasees*, have acknowledged its theology as the most unexceptionable that the wit of man has yet propounded ; and, in the present age, also, the most forward champions of the rising generation, disgusted with the popular superstitions of their country, have rallied around it, under the plea of returning to the pure, philosophical principles of their faith.

But what is the theology of the Vedánta? Some have denounced it as one of the grossest forms of pantheism. But such men have certainly done it injustice. Vedantism admits, nay, is grounded, on the belief of an immaterial Creator, the fount and origin of the whole universe. How then can it with propriety be said to correspond with that insane theory, which denies that there is a Creator or a creation, and designates universal substance God? The God of the Vedánta is a sublime conception, perhaps as sublime as unaided human reason could have represented him. He is defined to be “a Spirit without passions, and separated from matter ; pure wisdom and happiness ; everlasting, unchangeable, and incomprehensible.” He is also declared to be “sole existent, one without a second, uncreate, omnipotent, and infinite.” There may be errors in this idea of the Deity ; nay, we shall venture to assert that, considered in the sense in which the Vedantists interpret it, there are ; but, nevertheless, it is a noble one altogether, inculcating in strong language, the simplicity

and unity of God. "The best idea that we can form of God," then says the founder of the system, "is that he is light." Of this it may be said, that it gives us no idea of him at all. But even Milton has availed himself of the notion as a sublime one. It occurs also in the pages of the Bible,* and it would be absurd to set it down as impious.

So far pure natural theology and Vedantism, slight differences excepted, are the same. But this consonance of character is exceedingly short-lived, for Vedantism has peculiar dogmas to which the natural theologian can never agree to subscribe. If its expressive and exalted definition of theism conveys lofty and sublime conceptions of God, it cannot be denied, that that bright representation of the Deity is again compromised by being intermingled with positions irreconcilable with the divine character. The Great Spirit, which it recognises as God, is spoken of as "void of qualities" by the Vedánta, not meaning thereby that his qualities do not partake of the nature of our qualities, and are different from what our notions represent them, but that he is destitute of them altogether. "Every attribute of a first cause exists in him," says Vyasa, "but he is void of qualities." This, we believe, may very fairly be interpreted to mean, that the physical attributes, or attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, &c., are allowed to him, but not moral qualities, such as love, mercy and

* I. John—i. 5.

benevolence ; and we find it stated, that where such qualities are assigned to him, they have been so assigned merely to suit the Vedānta theology to the understanding of young beginners, and not under any impression that they actually exist in him. Vyasa takes care explicitly to inform us, that, though on this point the texts of the Veds themselves should be found contradictory, some enduing the Creator with every quality, and others denying them to him altogether, "the latter only are to be considered truly applicable, and not the former, nor yet both."

He is also spoken of as a Being unconnected with his own creation, sitting aloof in a state of profound abstraction and inactive tranquillity, and enjoying unimpassioned blessedness "in the solitariness of his own unity." He is not recognized under the Christian idea of Providence, as an all-superintending and ever-watchful agent, but in the idea of Epicurus, as one unencumbered with the management of the world, and free from the cares and vexations which attend such a charge. In the Suta Upanishad, Suta represents the Deity "like one asleep," and Krishna, in the Gītā, says, "these works (the universe) confine not me, for I am like one who sitteth aloof, uninterested in them all." Where stray texts vindicate his watchfulness, it is only to be understood, that, like a mirror, he receives the shadows of all surrounding objects. He is no more watchful than a passive mirror!

Unlike Epicurianism, however, which struggles to demonstrate that the world has been formed by mo-

tion acting on matter, without the agency of a Supreme intelligence, Vedantism roundly, but unhesitatingly, attributes the creation of the universe to God. Everything that exists, says the Vedánta, has been created by an act of his will; and it declares that no motive need be assigned for such creation, besides that will. We are not however to understand that "he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast." No. Dissatisfied with his own solitariness, he merely feels a desire to create worlds, and then the volition ceases, so far as he is concerned, and he sinks again into his apathetic happiness, while the desire, thus willed into existence, assumes an active character. This desire is severally called *máyá*, *sacti* and *prúcriti*, by different writers, and it is asserted, that by this *máyá* was the universe created, without exertion on the part of Bruhmu. Says the Mundaka Upanishad, "God desired and willed, and forth issued his energy, and from his energy proceeded life, minds, elements, worlds, duties and their fruits." In the Swetaswatárú Upanishad, this *máyá* is represented as "one unborn, red, white and black, creating many beings of the same forms : through delighting in whom one man is sunk in slumber, and by forsaking whose allurements another becomes immortal ;" and this is interpreted by Sancarácharjya to mean, that *máyá* (or the one unborn,) possesses the qualities of impurity, purity, and darkness ; that creatures formed by it are accordingly either affectionate, wise, or ignorant; and that whosoever delighteth in illusion, remains immersed

in darkness, but whosoever despises it, and is able to distinguish the real nature of his soul, obtains eternal bliss. The Vedānta also represents *māyā* as being that through which, or rather by means of which, the Deity, himself lost in calm repose, catches all the phenomena dependent upon the contemplation of the universe. This separation of energy from the god-head, is assuredly one of the boldest and obscurest conceptions ever hazarded by philosophy, and seems to have been adopted to obviate the difficulty of reconciling the origin of material substances from a purely spiritual source. "Of nothing comes nothing" appears to have been an admitted principle with all the philosophers of India. It was not possible even for God to create matter out of nothing. But how then was it to be formed? Spirit alone existed, and the Hindu metaphysicians accordingly set themselves to educe matter from it by gradual modifications. But to maintain that real matter could ever be actually educed, even by any such process, from spirit, was so palpably paradoxical, that they were compelled to take refuge under the bold hypothesis of an independent *māyā*, thus reducing all things in nature to mere phantasmagorian unrealities!

The first thing created by God, or rather produced by *māyā*, was, according to Vyasa, ether, or void space, as the word *ácās* has been differently translated. From ether was educed air, from air fire, from fire water, and from water earth. And it was by the energy of God, and not by their own act, that they

were so educated. But the things thus summoned into existence cannot yet be said to be actually existing. All bodies that exist, says the Vedānta, exist only so far as they are perceived, no more. The creation, so beautiful to look at, is only an illusion—the whole universe, with its multitudinous phenomena, a series of unreal perceptions. There is only one absolute unity really existing, and existing without plurality. But he is like one asleep. He willed it, and the universe was made, but the universe was made by *māyā*, and not by him. As an effect is inseparable from its cause, this universe is necessarily of the same nature as *māyā*, to which it owes its production; and *māyā* is represented in the Vedānta, as holding a position between something and nothing. It is both real and unreal—real, inasmuch as it is the cause of all that people usually look upon as real; but unreal, because it exists not as a being. It is not true, because it has no essence; and yet not false, because it exists as the power of God. The universe, in like manner, is real, because it appears so; but unreal, because in fact, it is only an appearance. “From the highest state of Bruhma to the lowest state of a straw, all are delusion,” says the text; and they would vanish into nothing, each element merging into one another in the reversed order of eduction, if that energy of the Great Spirit, to which they owe their origin, and which alone sustains the whole phenomenon, were for a moment to suspend its connection.

But the same course of evolution and absorption, says the Vedānta, cannot be affirmed of the soul, for it is not one of the productions of *máyá*. Life is the presence of the Deity in illusion. Its emanation is no birth, nor original production. "The body is mere illusion," and, like all other illusion, is created and dissolved; but neither its creation nor its dissolution affects the soul, for "the soul is not subject to birth or death." "It is not a substance of which it can be said it was, it is, or it will be hereafter; for it is eternal and inexhaustible, and is incapable of perishing with the body." "That self-existent and eternal intelligence," thus speaks of it the Katha Upanishad, "who is neither born nor dies, and who has neither proceeded from any, nor changed into any, does not perish when the body perishes." And it is also declared to be con-substantial with God. Says Vyasa, "All life is Bruhmu." "He is soul, and the soul is he." "All life is a portion of the Supreme Ruler, as a spark is of fire." So also, in the Vedānta Sāra, "An *individuated* spirit differs from God no more than one tree differs from a forest;" and the commentator of that work, Rāma Krishna Tirtha, observes, that the only object of the Upanishads is to explain that individuated souls are identical with the soul of the world. "Who, standing in the earth, is other than the earth," says Yagnawalkā to Uddalācā, "whom the earth knows not, whose body the earth is, who interiorly restrains the earth, the same is thy soul and mine." And Vāch, daughter of Ambhrina, speak-

ing of herself, says, "I am above the heavens, beyond this earth, and what is the Great One that am I." In the Rig Véd it is mentioned, that the aggregate life of all beings in existence constitutes a *fourth* part of God; but the Vedánta does not appear to recognise this sort of calculation by rule and compass. It only declares that the divine spirit, though differing in degree, is the same in nature with that of all living beings. It does not mutilate the Deity, for it maintains that individuated souls are portions parcelled without being actually cut off. The Deity remains entire.

Human spirit then is the same as the spirit of God. "There is no difference," says Sadánanda, "between the Supreme Ruler, and individual intelligences." "Both are pure life;" or, in other words, man and the Deity are essentially the same. The Gítá responds to the same sentiment. "The learned behold him, (God)" it says, "alike in the reverend Bráhmaṇ. perfected in knowledge, in the ox, and in the elephant," nay, "in the dog, and in him who eateth the flesh of dogs." Nor does the Vedantist stop here. The emanation of the soul, as it has just been explained, is no birth. The soul, says the text, "is neither *born* nor dies," nor is it a thing of which it can be said "it *was*, it is, or it will be." In the Veds themselves, it is declared to be "uncreate" and "eternal," and, in the Gítá, Krishna tells Arjun, that he and the other princes of the earth, "never were not." We do not remember if any of the philosophers

of Greece ever hazarded any similar dogma in building up their speculative theories. There were those indeed, who affirmed that God, passing through, pervaded all things; others, who maintained, that not only man, but brute animals, are allied to the Divinity, that one spirit, which pervades the universe, uniting all animated beings to itself and one another; and others again, who asserted, that nothing at all consisted without God. But the views of none of these philosophers can be said to include the idea, which the expressions "uncreate" and "never were not," used in speaking of the human soul, are calculated to convey.

We should perhaps here observe, that this identity of the human soul with God, has been regarded by some Christian writers, as an evident proof of the pantheistic nature of the Vedánta religion. If the souls of men are homogeneous with that of the Deity, if the spirits of creatures are uncreate and eternal, it follows as a necessary step, these authors have maintained, that they are each and all of them, gods. But this inference cannot be adopted. The God of the Vedánta is absolutely one, and the divine spirit in its state of plurality, therefore, is not God. Human spirit is the same as the spirit of God, indeed, but, says the text, "Human spirit is not God;" that is, a god in every soul is not the necessary inference. The Deity, though diversified in his creation, is not exhausted in the act. He still remains entire in himself, and that unity is God. Men partake of

the divine nature but as sparks partake of the nature of fire. They do not, neither individually nor collectively, represent the infinite whole, and the infinite whole alone is God.

It has also been attempted to affix the charge of materialism on the Vedānta, that is, to demonstrate, that, according to it, God is matter as well as life. But this too is not the fact. God is indeed spoken of as "the efficient and the material cause of the world," and as "the cause of all things, as well as the things themselves." But it is also maintained, in explicit terms, that God is a spirit, and immaterial; and, wherever he is mentioned as identified with matter, he is only identified as its source. Those expressions, therefore, that go to substantiate that he is matter also, are, we are persuaded, meant only to convey that he is the essence or the soul of matter. Actual matter, according to the Vedānta philosophy, has no real existence. Matter was neither created by God, nor co-existing with God, nor God himself. Nothing really exists but the first cause, and he is spiritual. All material substances are mere illusions, existing because pervaded by the energy of that spiritual first cause. The following quotation from the Gītā may, perhaps, put the question at rest: "I am the moisture in the water, light in the sun and moon, sound in space, human nature in mankind, sweet-smelling savour in the earth, glory in the source of light; *in all things I am life*; and I am zeal in the zealous, and the eternal seed of all nature." There are

texts also which mention, that the perfect spirit is united to gross matter and to material things only "as fire to red hot iron;" and that "He who dwelleth in all things, and is different from all things * * * is God."

But we are digressing. The notion that the soul of man is con-substantial with that of his Maker, though not essentially pantheistic, is, as understood by the Vedánta, certainly very absurd; and one absurdity, thus philosophically laid down, will draw after it many others. He that errs concerning the nature of the human soul, must err concerning its destination. The Greek philosophers, who maintained that the souls of mankind are portions or emanations of the Deity, believed also, that, released from the body, they returned again to God. This is likewise the creed of the Vedantist, except that he maintains, that they only who have obtained a knowledge of God, are rewarded with absorption, and that the rest continue to migrate from body to body, so long as they remain unqualified for the same. "Superior to nature is God, who is omnipresent, and without material effects: by acquisition of whose knowledge man becomes extricated from ignorance and distress, and is absorbed into him after death." "Learned men having reflected on the spirit of God extending over all moveable and immoveable creatures, are after death absorbed into the Supreme Being." "The knower of God becometh God." "As rivers flowing merge into the sea, losing both name and form, so the knower of God, freed from

name and form, merges in him, the excellent and glorious." This reunion with the Deity is identified with the attainment of the highest bliss, which even a state so high as that of Bruhma does not afford; and it consists in the total loss of personal identity, which has been well compared with a drop of water losing itself in the vast ocean. "Future happiness," says Vashishta, "consists only in being so absorbed into the Deity, who is a sea of joy." In this absorption there are no grades of bliss, and from it there is no return. All who attain it, attain for ever complete, final happiness. Its acquirement, therefore, is declared to be the great business of life. It is not however to be obtained by penances and mortifications, nor by the performance of meritorious actions—"For works," says the text, "are not to be considered as a bargain;" and again, "the confinement of fetters is the same, whether the chain be of gold or iron." Says Sancarācharjya, in a comment on the Gitā, "Knowledge alone, and that knowledge only which realizes every thing as Bruhmu, procures liberation." It enables the devotee to annul the effects of his virtues and vices. "All sins (good works, as well as misdeeds, are here meant by the term,) depart from him." "He traverses both, thereby," says the Vrihad Aranyaca Upanishad—"both merit and demerit." "The heart's knot is broken, all doubts are split, and all his works perish," says the Mundaka. And the Katha Upanishad asserts "there is no other way to salvation." "Oh, Parvati!" exclaims also the

Kularnava, "except that knowledge, there is no other way to absorption."

The use of the understanding is, therefore, declared to be superior to the practice of deeds ; for God is to be known only, says the text, "through the acute intellect constantly directed towards him by wise men of penetrating understandings." In the Varuni Upanishad, when Bhrigu asks his father Varuna to make known to him God, the sage tells him, "That spirit whence all beings are produced, that by which they live when born, that towards which they tend, and that into which they finally pass, seek thou to know, for that is Bruhmu:" and "seek him," adds the philosopher, "by profound meditation, for devout contemplation is Bruhmu." Perfect abstraction is, again, pronounced superior to this use of the understanding, for "when the senses and the mind are at rest," says the text, "and when the understanding is not occupied, that is the state for obtaining liberation:" and, again, "when the yogee renounces all assistance from the understanding, and remains without the exercise of thought, he is indetified with Bruhmu, and remains as the pure glass when the shadow has left it." Though he is still connected with the affairs of life, though he still eats and drinks, he is henceforth indifferent to the illusions which encompass him, and lives destitute of passions and affections, neither rejoicing in good, nor sorrowing in evil. He lives sinless; for, "as water wets not the leaf of the lotus, so sin touches not him who knows God;" and

in such a state of perfection as to stand in no further need of virtue ; for “ of what use can be a winnowing fan when the sweet southern wind is blowing.” The subject matter of all his meditations in this condition are : “ I am Bruhmu—I am life ;” “ I am everlasting, perfect, perfect in knowledge, free from change ; I am the self-existent, the joyful, the undivided, and the one Bruhmu.” Or rather, “ Neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor do I exist.” “ O God ! I am nothing apart from thee.” Nothing longer, says Siva, instructing Vishnu in the Suta Upanishad, will appear lovely or unlovely ; affection and hate will be annihilated, and the distinction of vice and virtue cease. Rites, offerings and penances may purify offences ; good actions may ensure a happy transmigration ; but, it appears, that this state of mind only, this utter indifference to the world, this perfect abstraction from thoughts, this torpid recognition of the all-exclusive unity of God, can rescue the soul from its liability to future birth, and effect alike in life-time, as after death, that absorption which is the *ne plus ultra* of the Vedantist’s highest aspiration.

But this knowledge of God is represented as excessively difficult of attainment, for man is begirt with illusion. “ The mass of illusion,” according to the Vedánta, “ forms the inconceivable and unspeakable glory of God,” for it is through illusion that his power is made manifest. It is the mask with which the Deity covers himself for his amusement, and “ it is the producing cause of consciousness, of the under-

standing, of intellect, &c." But illusion, as each individuated being feels it, is merely the absence of wisdom, as darkness is nothing more than the absence of light. From it are begotten all our passions and affections, and all the bonds which tether us to life ; and on account of it only is the human soul, by some means not palpable, excluded from participating in the divine nature, and subject to virtue and vice, the passions and sensations, birth and death, and all the varied changes of this mortal state. It is this that makes a man believe that appearances have a real existence, that images and shadows are actual realities, and that, not only this world really exists, but that he is nothing more than what he appears. It is this that makes God and soul, though con-substantial with each other, appear as distinct "as light and shadow." As a small cloud before the eye, though insignificant in itself, is, by its position, large enough to hide the sun, even so does this illusion screen the great Bruhmu from human understanding, and thus obstruct the attainment of that knowledge which alone can purchase our emancipation. Our ignorance is our bane.

To obviate this disadvantage, however, Vedantism extends indefinitely the term of man's probationary trial, and provides that the knowledge of God shall be attainable gradually, in the course of transmigrations, when it is found impracticable to be acquired in a single birth. But, under such circumstances, the Veds must be resorted to for help. By perpetual meditation

standing, of intellect, &c." But illusion, as each individuated being feels it, is merely the absence of wisdom, as darkness is nothing more than the absence of light. From it are begotten all our passions and affections, and all the bonds which tether us to life ; and on account of it only is the human soul, by some means not palpable, excluded from participating in the divine nature, and subject to virtue and vice, the passions and sensations, birth and death, and all the varied changes of this mortal state. It is this that makes a man believe that appearances have a real existence, that images and shadows are actual realities, and that, not only this world really exists, but that he is nothing more than what he appears. It is this that makes God and soul, though con-substantial with each other, appear as distinct "as light and shadow." As a small cloud before the eye, though insignificant in itself, is, by its position, large enough to hide the sun, even so does this illusion screen the great Bruhmu from human understanding, and thus obstruct the attainment of that knowledge which alone can purchase our emancipation. Our ignorance is our bane.

To obviate this disadvantage, however, Vedantism extends indefinitely the term of man's probationary trial, and provides that the knowledge of God shall be attainable gradually, in the course of transmigrations, when it is found impracticable to be acquired in a single birth. But, under such circumstances, the Veds must be resorted to for help. By perpetual meditation

on God, says the Vedánta, "a man may acquire a true knowledge of him, even without observing the rules and rites prescribed by the Veds." But those who are incapable of such devout meditation—and the best proof of such incapacity is the non-attainment of the end—must attend to the helping instructions of the scriptures. He that cannot run on his own errand must keep a saddle-horse. A regular perusal of the Veds, a due performance of religious services, without entertaining expectations of present or future rewards, self-purification by atonements and mental worship, the renunciation of things forbidden by the Shástras, and, above all, meditation on God in the forms by which he is known, together with a conviction of the unprofitableness of things belonging to a transient and fleeting life, will, if strictly adhered to, ensure to the devotee an ascent after death, to the heaven of Agni, and thence in succession to other heavens, till he reaches the abode or paradise of Bruhma, where he obtains the boon of immortality, there to wait to make perfect his abstraction, or, if his attainment of wisdom be complete, to pass at once from thence to a re-union with God. The knowledge of God acquired gradually, thus leads to absorption through the paradise of Bruhma,—acquired directly, to direct assimilation.

Nothing short of this knowledge however can, under any circumstances, procure liberation. Works, it has already been mentioned, will never secure it. "Actions, performed under the influence of illusion, are

followed by eight millions of births." And again, says the text, "The path of action is full of darkness." Hence the wise are repeatedly told to despise them. They are directed only to seek the knowledge of God, and, "for the sake of divine knowledge, to withdraw the mind and the understanding from all objects of the earth." "Knowledge and works both offer themselves to man, the wise chooses the first, despising the second, while the fool, for the sake of advantage and enjoyment, accepts what leads to fruition." Some have attempted to explain, that by works are meant only religious rites and observances. This, however, is not apparent. To us it appears that the term embraces both virtuous practices and religious austerities; and that the Vedānta repels good actions quite as much as evil deeds, is clear from what Vyasa says, that "the confinement of fetters is the same whether the chain be of gold or iron." "As an artizan taking his tools labors and undergoes toil and pain, but laying them aside, reposes, so is the soul a sufferer by means of its organs which propel it to action; but, divested of them, and returning to the Supreme one, is happy and at rest." And, says the Gītā: "His wisdom is confirmed, who, like the tortoise, can draw in all his members, and restrain them from their wonted purposes." Apathy the Vedānta considers as the best criterion of holiness, and the man who becomes as unfeeling as a stone or a statue, attains the perfection of it. A wise man ought not only to have no passions, but ought to annihilate his desires and affec-

tions, and suppress every act of consciousness and memory. He ought to do nothing, think on nothing, feel nothing, desire nothing, that nothing may disturb the quiet of his soul. He ought to be, says the text, "like a solitary lamp which burns peaceably, sheltered from all agitations of the air."

Those, however, who love works of merit, and perform them, shall not be entirely losers for their trouble. By their aid they will have the satisfaction of rising, step by step, on the arduous road to perfection; and the destruction of sin, and residence with the gods will be their reward. But in the heavens of the gods all enjoyment is temporary, and destined to terminate sooner or later, as the deeds which they recompense might have been few or many. "All the regions between this (the earth) and the abode of Bruhma afford but a transient residence," says the *Gítá*; and, says the *Sreemut Bhágvat*: "When works are exhausted by enjoyment, and their effects thus spent, where will be the enjoyment?" The souls thus temporarily happy will then have to return again to the miseries of the earth, but "with resulting influence of their former deeds," that is, obtaining a higher place here than they had enjoyed before. "A man whose devotions have been broken off," says the *Gítá*, "by death, having enjoyed for an immensity of years, the rewards of his virtues in the regions above, is born again in some holy and respectable family." A state of constant migration thus gives to all a chance of availing themselves of the only means held

out for final liberation, and should any one in its course obtain the knowledge of Bruhmi, "having annulled by fruition other works which had begun to have effect, having enjoyed the recompense and suffered the pains of good and bad actions, he, on the demise of the body, will proceed to a re-union with God." But the world is not eternal, nothing is eternal but God, and the day will inevitably come when the whole creation, with all its magnificence and beauty—with its various scenes and various actors,—must pass away. In that general destruction of the universe all things will be absorbed in Bruhmi, even as earthen vessels of every description, when broken, return to the clay, from whence they were formed. But souls that seek salvation by works, and those whose impediments to absorption, that is, the influence of whose former actions may yet remain unconsumed, will pass only to a state of non-existence, and not of absorption, and shall be liable to be reproduced at the pleasure of the Deity, at some future renovation of the world.

For the wicked are regions of retribution, and torments, and transmigrations through degraded births proportioned to their crimes; and these sufferings to continue in perpetual evolutions till they should have expiated their sins, or till they are involved in the general wreck of the universe. Of sin and holiness, however, no precise rules are laid down. All the philosophers agree that "the candidate for future bliss must renounce the indulgence of the passions;"

and we are told to conquer our evil propensities, and to perform good acts; for, though good acts will not obtain salvation, as a preparatory step they are "indispensable in the mind's approximation to God." But what will constitute a good act, and what not, is nowhere defined. What is agreeable to truth is good, and what is replete with error is evil, and what has a mixture of truth and error is imperfect. Nothing is good that does not serve to promote the attainment of the knowledge of God, and nothing can be bad that furthers this great object of human life.

It is not to be understood from anything that has been advanced, that Vedantism, upholding the knowledge of God as the great object of life, sets its face altogether against idolatry. Says the text? "This doctrine (of the knowledge of God) cannot be well comprehended, as it is very subtle." "Even gods were formerly involved in doubts respecting it." And it is presumed in divers places, that men of limited understanding will never be able to appreciate the theology of the wise, being incapable of raising their minds to the conception of a Deity declared to be both invisible and indescribable. For such men, the Vedānta tells us, the Yeds have prescribed idolatry, as a sort of mental exercise, calculated at once to secure them from the rock of atheism, and prepare their minds, by the adoration of representations, to resolve ultimately on God! They compose a numerous body, for all the lower castes are put down as incompetent for "theological studies and

theognostic attainments;" and, along with them, the whole female sex. They only, who are allowed to study the Veds, are authorized to seek the knowledge of God as inculcated therein. Says the text : " It is him (Bruhmu,) whom the *Bráhmans*, by the word of the Veds, and by religious austerities, wish to comprehend." The instances of Maitreyi and Soolubhá amongst women, and of Bidoor and Dharmabyádha amongst Sudras, who attained beatitude by the knowledge of God, are exceptions. But exceptions do not disprove a rule.

Such are the principles of the Vedánta religion, principles which purport to be founded on the Veds, the oldest and most sacred works on Hindu theology; nay, which pretend to be their only and fundamental teaching. How far these pretensions are just, remains to be enquired into; nor shall we avoid a discussion so materially important to our subject.

Each of the Veds, as is at present pretty well known, is divided into two parts, severally denominated the *Sánhitas* and the *Bráhmanas*, or prayers and precepts. The *Sánhitas* are comprised of hymns, prayers and invocations, addressed by the *Mahá Rishies* to the elements, the sun, the moon, and the stars at random; and collectively compose the liturgical part of the scriptures. The *Bráhmanas*, on the other hand, consist of precepts inculcating religious duties, and lectures directing religious observances; and form, according to Jaimini, a sort of supplement

to the Sānhitas. Those parts of the Brāhmanas which treat of Bruhmu are called the Upanishads. They are generally appendages to the preceptive sections, a few only existing in a separate form altogether, like strictures on the writ. And from these Upanishads, as we have seen already, in the course of our examination, the Vedānta theology is derived. If the Upanishads, therefore, be admitted as part and parcel of the Veds, the system of Vyasa has undoubtedly a just title to the derivation it claims. But it has been objected that the Upanishads are not legitimate portions of the original Veds; and, apart from other arguments, is urged the fact, that the peculiarities of their style and composition bear no resemblance to those of the more indubitable sections of the scriptures, which are all of them written in a more ancient, curious and rugged dialect. It is also urged that the Upanishads do not themselves ever profess to be of divine origin, as the Veds do, or any thing more than what they ostensibly are,—lectures addressed by certain preceptors to their pupils. The system deduced from them, therefore, cannot, from the mere circumstance of its having been so deduced, be admitted as the orthodox and original teaching of the Hindu scriptures. What trace have we in the earlier portions of the Veds of the theology which the Upanishads uphold? Have we none? The four following sentences occur in the Rig, Yajur, Sām and Atharvān Veds respectively: “This is Bruhmu,” “I am Bruhmu,” “That art thou,” “The soul is

Bruhmu." "Of him, whose glory is so great," says the white Yajur Ved, "there is no image. He it is who is celebrated in various holy strains. Even he is the God who pervades all regions. He is the first-born. It is he who is in the womb. He who is born : and he who will be produced ; he severally and universally remains with all persons." And, further on, the text says, "In him this world is absorbed ; and from him it issues ; and in creatures he is twined and wove with various forms of existence." The Rig Ved, alluding to the creation of the world, also says, "Then there was no entity, nor nonentity ; no world, nor sky, nor aught above it ; nothing any where, in the happiness of any one involving or involved. Death was not, nor then was immortality, nor distinction of day and night. But THAT (interpreted by the Vedānta to mean the Supreme Being,) breathed without afflation, single with (*Swa'dha*) her who is sustained within him. Other than him nothing existed. Darkness there was, this universe was enveloped with darkness, and was undistinguishable like waters: but the mask which was covered by the husk was produced by the power of contemplation. First desire was formed in his mind, and that became the original productive seed, which the wise, recognising by the intellect in their hearts, distinguish in nonentity as the bond of entity." All this is very vague and misty indeed, but a recognition of the theology upheld by the Upanishads may, perhaps, still be traced in them.

What then? what do they prove? They prove only that Vedantism is founded on the Veds; but they do not prove that it is either the only, or the essential doctrine of those stupendous records. Its pretensions of being the "resolution," or essence of the Hindu scriptures, are by no means borne out. We have not the whole Veds now before us; but we doubt not, that, when the labors of our great Orientalists shall have put the world in possession of them, we shall still have reason to maintain that the religion of the Veds is a discordant religion, and that every line of them, as Mr. Colebrooke has observed, is replete with allusions to mythology. Professor Wilson doubts "whether their authors entertained any belief in a Creator or Ruler of the universe," and says that it does not appear that they did so "from any passage hitherto met with." Well may he doubt, who at every new page meets with an invocation to a new deity, and finds at the end deities almost out-numbering their worshippers. One, struck with the beauty of the stars, has designated them the rulers of heaven and earth; another, astonished at the splendour of the sun, has named him a god; another has given that title to the moon, for her many charms; another, surprised at the extent and beauty of the firmament, has addressed that as the deity; another, amazed at the resplendence of fire, has worshipped fire as God; and so likewise have air, water and the spirits, received adoration. Some of the most ancient annotators are indeed of opinion, that all these numerous

designations are resolvable into the different titles of three deities, fire, air and the sun, and those three names again resolvable into one. But, even if this should be the case, what would it prove? Nothing, but a misapplication of ingenuity on the part of those commentators themselves. The worship of the elements and the planets, as dependent powers, is nowhere denied; on the contrary, it is systematically taught, and authoritatively enjoined. To what their names are reducible, in such a malleable language as the Sanskrit, is of no importance to the question. In the plainest manner the reader is directed to address his prayers to Indra, Agni, Yama, Varuna, Rudra, Soma and others, and this is a sufficient recognition of idolatry to substantiate the fact, that deism is not the religion of the Hindu scriptures. The mere admission of there being a superior God over them all, into whose names their names are resolvable, does not wipe away the charge of polytheism; nor can it reconcile the system with sound theology.

As the Vedánta has been derived from the Veds, even so have all the doctrines which obtain, or have obtained in the country, been educed. One portion of the Veds is always contradicting another, and its sacred precepts are so various in their nature, and admit of such a variety of interpretation, that we read, that there were at one time no less than eleven hundred schools of scriptural knowledge in India, each interpreting the sybilline texts according to its

bent. The Veds are nothing but an extensive collection of various sorts and fragments of belief, attempted to be collated and harmonised into one uniform system by their Brāhmanas and their Upanishads. But an effort to reduce so much incongruous matter into one consistent theory, though it brought into play the greatest talents, could of course never fully succeed, and hence contradictions stare us in the face at every step. The Hindu philosophers took advantage of this. Though widely differing from each other in their views of religion, we find them one and all placing themselves under the protection of the Veds, each believing himself to be nearer the truth than his neighbour, each contending that his system was the only fundamental teaching of those primordial scriptures. An assumption of this nature on the part of its advocates, appears to us to be the only basis of the pretensions of the Vedānta, to an exclusiveness in importance and authority.

But, though it cannot be admitted that the Vedānta is the only or essential religion of the Veds, it cannot either be denied that it is the best of all beliefs propounded in them; and hence, even from the remotest antiquity, it has always counted the greatest philosophers in its train. That its hold on the human heart has never been characterized by any extraordinary degree of adhesiveness, is indeed true, for frequent relapses into idolatry form one of the most notable features in the history of its development.

But if these general defections from the faith were so frequent, the revivals of it appear to have been equally oft recurring, and advocates seem never to have been wanting to rally round its decaying energies, and recal attention to its aspiring principles, either in tones of gentle expostulation, or indignant severity. Even in the present age, when the resuscitation of such a creed was most unexpected, champions have boldly come forward to revive it, openly and avowedly preferring it to Christianity, which has been so incessantly offered for their acceptance. ●

In the year 1828, the Bruhmu Subhá of Calcutta, was established by the late Rajah Rammohun Roy, for prosecuting the study of the Vedánta religion, and aiding its promulgation; and again, when it began to languish after his death, the Tuttwabodhini Subhá sprang into existence, organized "by a select party of ten friends," to answer the same end. The coalition of the two Subhás was the next step, and, since then, "not a single day passes," we are told, "without adding to the ranks of the supporters of the cause," and "the demand for religious instruction" has become so "extensive," that the tracts and books of the Society are more eagerly sought for than they can be supplied, and "the meetings of the Bruhmu *Sumáj* are attended by overflowing congregations." To meet this spirit of enquiry there is a monthly newspaper (the *Putrika*) to disseminate the doctrines upheld by the society, and Branch *Sumájes* likewise have been founded in many of the Mofussil out-sta-

tions in Bengal, on the same principle as the *Sumáj* in Calcutta. And lastly, we are told that the muster-roll of the Subhá counts a goodly array of bright names, "the names of influential, and respectable, and *talented* persons." To a minute and over-curious enquirer it may, perhaps, appear that many out of these names, however speculatively refined may be the men, are, with much greater justice, reckoned by the knowing priest-hood among the most stubborn supporters of popular polytheism ; but this of course is attributable only to the irreligious nature of the age, and, making ample allowance for every such defection, it may still be maintained that Vedantism is making rapid progress under the management of its present conclave.

But is the doctrine now promulgated with such success, and under such happy auspices, identical with the Vedánta of Vyasa ? This is worth enquiring into. The general notion is, that the system has been altogether recast and remodelled by its modern admirers,—so much so, that people doubt if, as at present current, it be entitled to the same name. The Brahmu Subhá unhesitatingly discards the philosophy of Vyasa as "totally unconnected with its principles of belief," and, conferring the name of the Vedánta, only and exclusively on the Upanishads, as the terminating sections of the scriptures, throws his analysis of scriptural theology, otherwise called "the resolution of the Veds," and heretofore so much in repute as "the best and most revered guide" in re-

ligion, at once overboard, perhaps as too antiquated and unsound to suit the intellect of the rising generation. It rejects altogether the aid of philosophy in matters of religion, and affecting to trust implicitly in the revelation of the Veda, appeals to them, and them alone, as the only authority of its creed. But, though divested of its religious authority, the Vedánta of Vyasa still remains a living testimony of what Vedantism was in the good old days of yore. The doctrines and dogmas laid down by the compiler of the Veds, were the doctrines and dogmas in vogue with all the earlier Vedantists, undeniably so, slight differences excepted, up to the age of Sadánanda, if not to a later period. What then? The Bruhmu Subhá is not bound to follow on their heels. It becomes, however, necessary, if it has swerved from the beaten track, first to examine the extent of its departure, then to exhibit its peculiar doctrines, and finally to determine on what foundations they rest.

The Vedánta declares the Supreme Ruler to be *destitute of qualities*, the possession of qualities being considered irreconcilable with perfection. It allows him those physical attributes only which are indispensable to a first cause, but no other attributes at all. It is true, indeed, it says, that the Veds speak of him in divers places as endued with every quality and particular character, but in many more they represent him as without form or quality, and "the latter only is truly applicable, not the former, nor yet both." The Bruhmu Subhá, on the contrary, main-

tains that God possesses all qualities, those only excepted which vacillate, and change, and perish. To dress him with these would be, it says, "to liken the atom of a day to the everlasting." Alas! it forgets that no religion on the face of the earth, likens the Creator with his creatures oftener and more explicitly than the Vedánta!—*All spirit*, says the Vedánta, is *homogeneous*, and the spirit of God is the same in kind, though not equal in degree, to that of man. "The whole meaning of the Vedánta is comprised," says Sadánanda, "in this, that Bruhmu and individuated spirits are one." But the Bruhmu Subhá discards these dogmas as comprising no parts of its belief. Though Vyasa clearly lays down in his Sūtras, that "all life is Bruhmu," and, in the Gītá, makes Krishna tell Arjun, "thou and the princes of the earth never were not," our modern Vedantists maintain that the human spirit is altogether distinct from the divine spirit, and not like it, uncreate; and this all the while admitting that the school of Vyasa "support their opinion by several citations from the Veda!"—The Bruhmu Subhá denies that a *knowledge of God transforms* a man into *sameness* with the Deity, and that the highest object of religious meditation is to discover that the worshipper himself is *identical* with Bruhmu. But Vyasa and his followers, maintained both these beliefs. "Perform the appointed ceremonies for subduing the passions, listen to discourses on the divine nature, fix the mind unwaveringly on God, purify the body by incantations and

other ceremonies, and persuade thyself that thou and the Deity are one." The human spirit is distinct from God, according to orthodox Vedantism, only so long as man in his blindness entertains an idea of self-individuality. But, as soon as he acquires intelligence enough to divest himself of this idea, he at once becomes identified with God. "As pure water dropped into the limpid lake is such as that is," so is the soul of him who has attained the perfection of divine knowledge, the same with Bruhmu. "Let it be known," says Sancarácharjya, in commenting on one of the texts of the Swetaswatára Upanishad, "that all is the Supreme soul, and soul-less *máyá* ceases. Let the intimate conviction be acquired that I am Bruhmu, and the knowledge of the divine nature of the soul be obtained, and *máyá* will cease."—The Bruhmu Subhá repudiates the idea that God is *unencumbered with the cares of empire*, or sits aloof in a state of profound abstraction and uninterrupted repose; and maintains that Bruhmu is eternally awake and ever watchful, and "is assigning to all his creatures their respective purposes," and that, by his "inscrutable providence," all "things are tending to ultimate and universal welfare." And yet, it seems to have been the general belief of the earlier Vedantists, that God is eternally asleep, or in such a state as to be unconnected with the cares of the world; and Suta alludes to it in the Suta Upanishad, when, explaining to the sages that the universe was produced by *máyá*, he says, "God being like one asleep." Beyond the sim-

ple act of having desired to become many, God never appears in the Vedānta in an active character.—The Bruhmu Subhā states that “*divine worship* consists in the contemplation of the moral and natural attributes of our Creator, and in the *practice of virtue*.” But the “practice of virtue,” according to the Vedānta, forms no part of the worship of God, and stands so far in the way of salvation, that if a man should even acquire the knowledge of God, who had previously been in the habit of acting virtuously, he cannot obtain emancipation till the effect of his works is worn out, that is, till he has enjoyed the rewards of his virtuous actions; for “the arrow which has been shot completes its flight, nor falls till its speed is spent, and the potter’s wheel, once set in motion, whirls till the velocity which has been communicated to it is exhausted.” Vice and virtue the Vedānta recognises alike among the illusions of *māyá*; and salvation is held out only to him who has “torn asunder all the bonds of delusion.” “Knowledge of God which leads to absorption,” says the Katha Upanishad, “is one thing, and works which have only fruition for their object another.”—It is not necessary, for the Vedantist, (believes the Bruhmu Subhā) to lead a *life of inactivity and apathy*, or to sacrifice his social affections in seeking a knowledge of God; but the doctrines upheld by Vyasa and his disciples, require a total renunciation and forgetfulness of the world as imperatively necessary to the attainment of beatitude; for, says the text,

"liberation is to be obtained only by divine wisdom, which however cannot exist in the mind without wholly extinguishing all consciousness of outward things by meditation on the one Bruhmu."—The Bruhmu Subhá maintains, that "*repentance and the earnest endeavour to avoid similar transgressions,*" are the only ways of expiating evil deeds;" but the Vedánta does not seem at all to recognise repentance as of any utility. The man who practices evil deeds, must as surely pass through a loathsome metempsychosis, as he who performs good works will pass through a happy transmigration, unless he performs religious austerities and atonements, (which have very little affinity with "*repentance, and the earnest endeavour to avoid similar transgressions,*") to annul his crimes; or good works to cancel them: on the same principle as debts are re-paid by obligations.—In alluding to the duties we owe to ourselves, the Bruhmu Subhá mentions, that "our appetites and passions should be held under due restraint and control," and "the better class of affections" kept in proper exercise; but the Vedánta, on the contrary, maintains that they should all be *annihilated* and *extinguished* by him who wishes for liberation.—Finally, the Bruhmu Subhá maintains that *God created the world out of nothing*, but none of the earlier Vedantists ever disputed the correctness of the dogma that "*nothing can come out of nothing.*" Matter, they all believed, was but an illusory modification of spirit—of the "one without a second."

The peculiar doctrines of the Bruhmu Subhā may, therefore, be thus summed up. It believes in the existence of a Supreme Ruler, possessed of superlative and infinite attributes. It believes that he is altogether distinct from other existences, and not essentially the same with any of them. It believes that no knowledge, however vast, no rectitude, however great, can transform a human spirit into *sameness* with the Deity; such knowledge and such virtue being competent only to elevate him to a state of supreme felicity *resembling* that of the Creator. It recognises God in the light of a provident father, ever watchful, and so regulating the whole creation by inscrutable means, as to make every thing tend to "ultimate and universal welfare." And his worship is stated to consist in devout contemplation, and the practice of "active virtues." Repentance is also pointed out to sinners as a sufficient expiation for crime, and directions are given to all, to purify their passions and inclinations, instead of annihilating them for ever.

This short summary, if we have herein depicted the belief of the Bruhmu Subhā aright, contains, we believe, the sum total of its departure from the faith of the earlier Vedantists; and it cannot be denied, that, by this deviation, it has materially improved the original creed. But the foundations on which the improvements made by it rest, are of course unsound. Most of the doctrines appear to have been borrowed from Christianity. But the Bruhmu Subhā dares not acknowledge the theft; and its appeals to the Upanishads for

support, are, at the same time, not zealously responded to. A few detached texts are all the Upanishads can afford to apologise for such glaring innovations; and they are, for the most part, very imbecile friends. The possession of infinite attributes and superlative qualities by Bruhmu is, for instance, vindicated by such texts as "He who is truth, intelligence and infinity, is Bruhmu;" and "He, by whom the birth, existence and annihilation of the world are regulated, is the Supreme Being." His distinctness from other existences, or, rather, from the human spirit, is also attempted to be proved by such texts as "two birds, friends and co-habitants, reside unitedly in one tree, &c." and "human spirit is not God." And his watchfulness and providence, again, are vindicated by the text, "that being, who, while all creation sleeps, is ever watchful, and who dispenses to all creatures the diversified objects of desire, is incomparably pure, and the greatest of beings." And so on of the rest. But these are isolated passages only; and, further, not all of them to the point, nor sufficiently clear and decisive in their verdict to ignore the authority of those numerous texts, which uphold the orthodox notions, that Bruhmu is destitute of qualities, homogeneous in spirit with other beings, apathetic in nature, destitute of passions, &c. Not passages taken out at random, but the spirit and drift of the whole Upanishads, support the dogmas entertained by Vyasa and his followers; and texts which appear to sustain contrary notions, can only be regarded as contradic-

tory statements of little or no validity. It must also be remembered, that the Bruhmu Subhá interprets all doubtful texts with the help of modern philosophy, thus frequently giving to them different constructions than Vyasa or Sancarácharjya, in their ages of limited knowledge, had the power to conceive, or the courage to adopt. Points which never struck them as important, or were left in the shade as unorthodox, according to the notions of their times, are now prominently held up; while those on which they principally confided, are often wholly set aside as too futile for an age like the present. On the one hand, the Subhá allots undue importance to certain isolated texts and passages which favor its views of the subject, and, on the other, it glosses over the rest in a manner the best calculated to accord with its design. Its appeal to the Veds is, after all, but a mere cloak of orthodoxy, and it is pretty plain that "the select party of ten friends," who organised the society in 1839, did so with pre-conceived notions on religion, imbibed from other sources than those venerated by their *rishees*; and that, actuated by an excusable partiality for home-spun manufacture, they have since then, exercised their efforts only to reconcile, by every means in their power, and every sort of interpretation they could hazard,—by selecting, rejecting, and remodelling their texts,—the Shástras of their country, with those pre-conceived notions. The enlightened youths of the age, who have since rallied round the standard of the Bruhmu Subhá, and augmented its numerical

strength from ten to some hundreds, appear likewise, to have done so from mistaken feelings of patriotism; identifying the doctrines upheld by that society, with the proud reminiscences of Hindu glory, and anxious to set up a plausible rival to Christianity.

But the rival thus set up to Christianity has many drawbacks to acceptance which do not seem to have been well weighed by its enthusiastic admirers. We do not urge these now, under any impression of being able to reclaim any of them from their belief; but, as our colleges and schools are daily giving out fresh sets of reformers to the country, we are anxious that these, having eyes, should see, and having ears, should hear. It is not our purpose to preach Christianity to them; we leave that task to the ministers of the Gospel. But we have a few words to speak against the Vedānta, and we would fain deliver them at once, and have done.

The Bruhmu Subhā believes in the revelation of the Veds, and so did the earlier Vedantists. But surely that revelation has not yet been proved. There are no data even to fix the age of the Hindu scriptures, nor any collateral testimony to show to whom, when, and where they were revealed. The tradition respecting their divine birth, which is immemorially current in the country, has been urged by the Bruhmu Subhā in place of historical evidence, on the plea, that, in all countries, immemorial tradition is the foundation of ancient history. True indeed. But, in the first place, it is not every tradition that is so taken up at hap-hazard to supply the place of authentic narrative;

and the Bruhmu Subhá should remember, that the authority to which it appeals, as commemorating the divine parentage of the Veds, records likewise, as facts, divers other things of such wild and extravagant character, as no man in the exercise of reason and common sense may admit, as for instance, the existence of mountains of solid gold and silver, and of seas of liquid amber, of clarified butter, milk, curds and the intoxicating liquors! In the second place it must be remembered, that this same tradition, thus appealed to, attributes the paternity of the Veds to Bruhmu himself, mentioning that they issued direct and entire out of his mouth; while the Veds themselves, on the contrary, in many places bear positive evidence that they are the works of human hands. Thus, for instance, the Sánhitas profess only to be a collection of hymns and prayers, addressed to different gods by different *rishees* named therein, each in his respective prayer. Immemorial tradition also declares the writ to be coeval with the creation, and eternal; but the proof of their human origin just cited, shows also, that the prayers must have been subsequent to the birth of the *rishees* who composed them, and not the *rishees* subsequent to the age of the prayers. Names of other philosophers and theologians also occur in them, and several persons of royal birth are likewise mentioned, whose names occur in the mythic history of India. The Bruhmu Subhá, as a set-off to this argument, maintains, that by calling the Veds eternal, it is only meant that they record eternal truths, and by urging

that they are revelations, simply that they were written by inspiration. It then at once appeals to the Veds themselves as bearing the best internal evidence of their divine character, and refers us to "the drift and tendency, the reasonableness and cogency of the doctrines taught in them." So indeed do the Mahomedans refer their adversaries to the intrinsic merits of the Koran, mistaking its unmeaning rhapsodies for the dicta of heaven. If the principles of morality inculcated in the Veds had been invariably sound, if the theology therein laid down had been consistent and correct, we might have been disposed to attach great weight to a reference to those scriptures themselves, and might have even considered the want of historic proof amply compensated for, in their case, by their moral excellence; although, as a general rule, it would be madness to admit that either cogency of doctrine, or beauty of style, is any proof of the divine paternity of a book. But pure, unadulterated theology, occupies but a limited place in the Veds. It is only to be occasionally met with in the Upanishads, and they, far from being the principal portion of the Veds, as some have contended, are suspected, on strong presumption, to be additional works tacked up with the original scriptures, long after the era when the Sānhitas had birth. The worship inculcated by the Sānhitas was altogether without a system. It had only the poetry of religion without its philosophy, and the best scholars are unanimous in opinion, that the philosophical and preceptive parts of the scriptures

are supplementary to the mythological portions. "The prayers," says Mr. Colebrooke, "are properly the Veds, and apparently preceded the Bráhmaṇas;" which owed their origin, most probably, to some great master-minds, the lights of those dark ages, who, attempted by them, and more especially by means of the Upanishads appended to them, to harmonize the more primitive, foolish and inconsistent doctrines, as much as they could be harmonized, with common sense. If the Upanishads had existed alone, we might have been tempted to admit, what the Bruhmú Subhā claims for the whole Veds, that they record the eternal truths of religion; with this proviso, that our belief would still be, that the truths so contained were but fragmental, mutilated and garbled, and worked up with error,—much of good mixed with more of nonsense and folly: but, as the Veds now stand, a large, heterogeneous mass, of which one part will not bear to be reconciled with another, in which one section is replete with high-sounding prayers and invocations to the heavenly host, another with prescriptions of childish rites and sacrifices, another with incantations for averting danger and procuring the destruction of enemies, and another with recipes for the adoration of that God who is declared to be one without a second, bearing no form, and having no qualities,—as the Veds now stand, it is impossible for any rational man, calm, dispassionate and unprejudiced, to read in their intrinsic merits any proofs of revelation or sacred inspiration. As a whole they

are utterly worthless; nor can we judge of them by parts, without breaking down their pretensions.

There are, besides, other difficulties in the way of receiving Vedantism as a divine revelation; for instance, its errors in physiology. Of nourishment, it says, "corn and other terrene food become flesh; but the coarser particles are rejected, and the finer nourish the mind. Water is converted into blood, the coarser particles are rejected, and the finer support the breath. Oil, and other combustible substances deemed igneous, become marrow, the coarser particles form the bone, and the finer supply the faculty of speech." Witness also its errors in natural philosophy. "The sun is born of fire," "The moon is born of the sun,"* "Rain comes from the moon," "Lightning comes of rain." And again, "the liberated soul passes along a sun-beam from the crown of the head, through various regions, to the sun, thence to the moon, from the moon to the region of lightning, from the region of lightning to the realm of Varuna, (the region of the rain-cloud,) thence to the realm of Indra, and from thence to the abode of Prajāputi." Passages recording notions equally false, puerile and absurd respecting geography and astronomy, can also be referred to. Will not a recognition of the revelation of the Veds, under such circumstances, be tantamount to accusing the Deity of such

* Opposed to this text, again, is that which says "Prajāputi gave his daughter Surya Savitre to Soma the King."

ignorance, as even a school-boy of the age would be ashamed of? Or must we adopt the inconsistent alternative, that the religious precepts of the Veds are divine—their scientific problems false?

Its sufference of idolatry is another insuperable objection to the Vedánta religion, in any of its phases, being adopted as a revelation. We have admitted ere now, that the Upanishads do assert and vindicate the existence of one great, universal, self-existent God, and that they speak of his physical attributes with profound admiration, and thrilling eloquence. But is this glowing admission of monotheism a sufficient counterpoise for the idolatry they simultaneously inculcate? Are clashing claims of other gods, however dependent they may be, reconcileable with those of a Supreme Creator? Idolatry is false, says the Vedánta, but yet necessary for those unfortunate men who are incapable of elevating their minds to sublimer doctrines. The worship of the celestial gods has been inculcated only for the sake of the vulgar, that they may not be altogether destitute of religious principles. But inculcated by whom?—not by men. Oh no! It has the same paternity as the Vedánta itself; it has a place in the Veds!—it comes directly from God! One may well be surprised that God should thus be represented as recognising an aristocracy in religion, prescribing one faith for the wise man, and another for the ignorant, and these too the while diametrically opposed to each other. The Bruhmú Subhá says, “The ways of the Creator are

the ways of simplicity," and "the mercy of God is as surely universal as that he is the father of all creatures." Why then does it believe that this God, so merciful, and whose ways are so simple, should reveal a religion so metaphysical as to be above the comprehension of ordinary minds, and be thus compelled to frame another for the vulgar, and that other, a tissue of lies and errors? Are we to suppose that God was incapable of propounding a doctrine plain enough at once to the humblest and the highest conception? A tissue of lies and errors for the ignorant, and God the author of it! The defenders of Vedantism contend, that idolatry is only enjoined as something like a concession to the wants, and not as a prescription for the beatitude of the multitude. But the pure God is assuredly not capable of making even a concession of such sort, and of promulgating falsehood even for furthering the cause of truth. It also deserves to be noticed, that in the Upanishads themselves, it is maintained that the knowledge of God can be acquired but by few, for its attainment is as difficult as a passage over the sharp edge of a razor. "A few amongst ten thousand mortals," says also the Gítá, "strive for perfection, and but a few of those who strive and become perfect know me (Krishna) according to my nature." Is it possible that for such a select few of philosophers, God, the supreme maker of the whole universe, the father of all his creatures, should have committed the great mass of mankind to the mercy of a multifarious polytheism? As for

idolatry serving to prepare men's minds for those trains of thought which lead to religion and morality, or, as the Bruhmú Subhá so happily expresses it, as "a ladder to rise by degrees to the worship of the light of lights," it is just as possible, we suppose, as for dissipation and excess to restore an exhausted constitution to its pristine vigor and health. How,—by what steps,—can a man come to the idea of a God just in his laws, wise in his purposes, and benevolent in his dispensations, by thinking of him as an incestuous being and an adulterer? By what steps can a man form a correct notion even of the Vedantist's Bruhmú, by the worship, for instance, of Yama, who, in the Rig Ved, is mentioned as endeavouring to seduce his twin-sister Yamuna, and is only deterred from fulfilling his incestuous inclinations by her earnest expostulations; or by the worship of Indra, who is everywhere mentioned as keeping a zenana after the fashion of Oriental sovereigns? It is the very nature of idolatry to degrade and debase the human mind, and it is altogether impossible that God should have ever so far forgotten his own benevolent nature as to have enjoined it to any portion of his creatures, however obtuse might have been their intellect, and however diseased their minds. The alliance of Vedantism with idolatry, therefore, so far as it does exist, is in itself sufficient to disprove all its pretensions to a divine origin. It strikes at once at the root, for it annihilates the authority of the Veds.

A comparative examination of the Gospel and the Vedánta would perhaps best conclude this long essay; and as the point to be decided is, which as an universal religion is entitled to preference, we shall leave the question of revelation altogether apart for the present, and view the rivals only in an utilitarian light. The world is getting more and more utilitarian every day. Let Utility then answer if she prefers Vedantism to Christianity.

Vedantism declares that God is one, one without a second; absolutely, and by necessity of nature, one. This is also the Christian's faith, for Christ, we believe, is generally understood to be only a personification of the *mercy* of God, and the Holy Ghost of his *power*. "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one God." But the monotheism of the Bible means only to deny the existence of other gods. Vedantism goes further, for it also denies the distinct existence of all other creatures. God alone exists, alone in all the universe, and nothing exists but he. Every other apparent thing that lives, moves, or hath a being, is only a part of his eternal and uncreated spirit, and destined, when purified from the pollution it has derived from its connection with matter, to be absorbed into him again. This is the orthodox Vedántic opinion. Some regard it as overwhelmingly grand. An absolute unity—one *without a second*, displaying itself in divers characters, through the medium of illusions, is perhaps a magnificent idea, that overwhelms us with a vengeance! It is cer-

tainly one well-calculated to amuse the genius, of speculation, of fancy, and of dogmatism. But it brings with it no conviction; for it is too far removed from the sphere of reason and common sense. Our own faculties rebel against the hypothesis, and reject it as sublimely fantastical. The Christian feels that he cannot subscribe to it. His God too, he believes, is every where, filling heaven and earth with his immensity, and present alike in beings animate and inanimate. Yes, he is the beauty of the stars, the brightness of the sun, the purity of the heavens; from him the politician derives his sagacity, the philosopher his wisdom, the soldier his coolness and undaunted courage; we all breathe his air, his spirit animates us, his power upholds us, his guidance directs us; in short, "in him we live and move, and have our being!" But this idea of the divine nature is independent of the existence of the things and lives thus pervaded by the Deity, and the spirit of God is never confounded into sameness with the spirit of man. The Christian believes that all life has been created by, and is distinct from, God. Nothing approaches him either in nature or magnitude, and no virtue can render the spirit of man absorbable into that of his Maker. Nay more, he believes that not only is the human soul distinct from God, but distinct in each individual. As many men, so many souls. The Hindu farmer has not a common soul with the czar of Russia, no, nor with the wandering Esquimaux of the Arctic regions.

Now, we ask not which of these doctrines is true, but we ask which is more useful; whether it is more for the advantage of men that they should receive a doctrine which is in accordance with the consciousness and judgment, and common sense of all mankind, or that they should strive to persuade themselves into a belief that they do in some way believe a doctrine which is contradictory of all the dictates of consciousness and common sense.

The God of the Vedānta is again represented as apathetic to the concerns of the world—inhabiting, in a state of profound abstraction and infinite blessedness, his own eternity. This too is a strange idea, and must have originated in the mistaken notion, that the conduct of the world would be an employment sufficiently irksome to disturb his felicity. It leaves us exposed to the buffetings of a cruel world, without a single prop to support us, deprives us of every hope of assistance, and throws us, infirm as we are, altogether on our own imbecile resources. It too militates strongly against the Christian's belief, who recognises the Divine Providence exercising a constant superintendence over the affairs of life, and continually interested in the well-being of his creatures. The God of the Bible sleeps not; and nothing happens in all the universe but what he has designed and foreknown. He is represented as standing to us in the nearest relations, as our "father," by whom we are protected every moment of our lives; as our "counsellor," by whom we are

instructed in the duties of our station; as our trust and stay in danger, and our solace and comfort in affliction. If God were indeed "like one asleep," as the Vedānta represents him, and unmindful of our ways and doings, there could be no utility of such a being, as far as we are concerned, and the necessity of paying him any sort of adoration or homage would altogether cease; for he that cares not for his creatures, of course cares little whether they exalt or neglect him. The necessity of acting well in life would necessarily cease also.

The Christian again clothes his God in a radiant panoply of moral attributes, but the Vedānta allows no such perfection to Bruhmu. He is omnipotent and he is eternal, self-existent and unchangeable; in a word, the greatest of beings. But the qualities that could alone make such a nature attractive to man are not allowed to him. He is merely a great being. Not a single feature in his character is calculated to win for him the affections of the human heart. He does not love, and he does not hate,—he is neither merciful nor benevolent, neither jealous nor capable of wrath. Even the fundamental point, that God conceived a desire to create worlds, is hotly contested by subtle disputants, on the ground, that it is impracticable for a simple being like Bruhmu to feel any feeling, and that it would be a reproach on his immutable nature to suppose him capable of cherishing any desire. He is *nirgun*, or devoid of qualities. Christianity, on the contrary, speaks explicitly, not

only of the love and mercy, the goodness and truth of God, but, also, of his jealousy and wrath; and almost seems to assert, that to deny him these attributes is to deny, so far as human nature is concerned, that there is a God at all. He is wrathful because of his bitter hatred of sin, and he is jealous because he will not relinquish his glory, nor his praise, in favour of graven images; for beside him there is no other God.

The notion of God, as inculcated by the Vedānta, is also too metaphysical to answer any useful purpose. All classes of men alike require religious instruction. The unlettered workman stands in as much need of it, as the learned sage; the poorest man wants it as urgently as the richest. But all have not the same mental powers. The intellects of all are not equally strong. Hence the need of a religion, simple in all its principal bearings, adapted to every understanding, and competent to guide all men to one peaceful haven. And this need the Vedānta does not supply. It is not only beyond the appreciation of the vulgar, as it itself very candidly presumes, but, we should say, it is unsuited to the apprehension of all. At every step the enquirer finds himself lost, as in the intricacies of a labyrinth; for even its most essential doctrines partake more of the character of metaphysical and enigmatical problems to puzzle the wise, than of admitted religious truths for all to accept. The very Upanishads themselves bear testimony how some of the subtlest philosophers were perplexed in endea-

vouring to appreciate the religion. As an instance, we need cite only the queries of Ushwaputi, in the Ch'handagya Upanishad, to the six enquirers after divine knowledge, who came to him for instruction, together with their answers. "Whom dost thou worship?" he asks of each of them individually; and one answers that he worships "heaven," another "the sun," the third "air," the fourth "ether," the fifth "water," and the sixth "the earth." These were the answers, not of ignorant men unlearned in the scriptures, but of sages who were, to quote the language of the Upanishad, "deeply conversant with holy writ." In another place, in the same Upanishad, Nárada, soliciting instruction from Sanutcumár, says of his previous studies, "I have learnt the Rig Ved, the Yajur Ved, the Sám Ved, the Atharván, the fourth, the Itihása and Purán," &c.

* * * "All these have I studied, yet do I only know the text, and have no knowledge of the soul." Few enquirers ever come so prepared to the search after truth; and if even those who do this can err so widely, the fault must be in the system, and not in the men. How far the Vedánta would have been sufficient to meet the wants of the human race, if all men had been philosophers, is not the question; though its success, even in that case, may well be doubted. We must take men as we find them, and not as we might wish they had been; and we find them ignorant and wretched, poor victims of their passions and prejudices, the best sullied with sin, the worst wal-

lowing in iniquity. For such a multitude, a religion so obscure can have no charms, and people might well prefer, as they have done, rather to bow to stocks and stones, and images created by themselves, than approach the pale of its mysteries. Christianity is, in a great measure, free from such obscurity. It is open to the comprehension of all, the learned and the unlearned, the sage philosopher and the illiterate peasant. The fundamental truths of the religion lie within reach of people of the meanest capacities. To the lowly in spirit, and the humble in heart, was it originally preached, and, though more than eighteen hundred years have elapsed since its first promulgation, the lowly in spirit and the humble in judgment are still its staunchest followers. It does not appeal to philosophy in addressing the ignorant, for philosophy mistrusts herself, and has never yet succeeded in curing a distracted mind. It appeals to its own pure doctrines, and to the heart of the sinner who approaches it. Hence has such triumphant success attended its footsteps, hence have men of every variety of temper, rank and circumstance acknowledged its influence.

Vedantism believes also in the perfection of the human spirit. The soul is a spark of the Deity, and can never err. "As a crystal may receive on its surface the reflection of the colours of a flower, itself remaining clear and undergoing no change," even so the soul is unaffected by sin. All that is wrong is its connection with matter, or rather with

illusion ; and it is this only that renders it liable to rewards and punishments, to neither of which, as pure spirit, it would otherwise have been subject. Christianity, on the contrary, is founded upon the fact of the soul's depravity, and points to all its doctrines, as forming together one great scheme to redeem it. The one says, "think on God wholly and exclusively, and you will be re-united to him ;"—the other,—"kneel and pray, and repent of your wickedness, and do what is lawful and right, that you may be saved from destruction." The one, like Satan in the Bible history, says, do this and ye shall be gods—the other avers that the highest virtue will not cover all the transgressions of our sinful nature, and that the holiest of men must be indebted to the mercy of God for final salvation. Of the two, the belief of the Christian is surely far better calculated to teach us humility, and our immeasurable distance from the Deity. Man, oppressed by the weight of his iniquity, can find neither comfort nor consolation in the idea of being consubstantial with his Maker. It does not satisfy the longings of the soul. It is a vain chimera of philosophy, and as pernicious as it is vain ; for it not only deludes the understanding, but also corrupts the heart ; unsettling the very foundations of virtue and religion. The mortifying fact that we are sinners all, cannot be repeated to us too often.

Again, while Christianity requires us to purify and elevate our passions and affections, Vedantism

reckons them a reproach, and directs us to extirpate them altogether. While the one enjoins on us the practice of piety and moral rectitude, the other upholds apathy as our only duty on earth. Spiritual and secular occupations, the Vedántic system presumes, cannot be pursued together. Heaven, or rather absorption, is to be won only by eschewing the earth, and by completely withdrawing ourselves from it ; and the beau-ideal of a human character is represented to consist in the absence alike of love and antipathy, of joy and sorrow, of good and evil desires, or, in one word, in total self-unconsciousness. On the plea of seeking the knowledge of God, one may ease himself altogether, if he likes, of the yoke of works. You need not love your neighbours nor relieve the poor, you need not admit even the claims of your family on your affection and assistance. If you endeavour to make yourself profitable to others, it will be a drawback to your attainment of final beatitude ; for social feelings are all unrealities, the workings of nature within the heart are indicative of sheer ignorance ; and while ignorance continues, there is no hope of salvation. Virtues have their rewards, but the rewards of virtue are impediments to absorption. Be indifferent therefore to the affairs of life, and alive only to the misery you are born to—the misery of being connected with matter. The object of life is only to get free from the trammels of an individuated existence, and all its duties therefore consist simply in thoughtless abstraction, which alone

can secure to the soul her freedom. Christianity, on the other hand, considers perfect indifference a monster in morality, and enjoins on all a life of constant well-doing. The glory of the great God, whom the Christian recognizes, is intimately allied with the good of his created millions, and the noblest duty of those who look forward to a future world, is stated to consist in the endeavour to realize to the whole human species the greatest amount of happiness in this.

Vedantism again has no moral code to define good from evil actions. A general and vague recommendation of virtue it may boast of indeed, in common with all other religions ; but in what that virtue consists it does not clearly lay down. Scattered passages in the Veds are referred to, in order to show that this should be done, that not ; but these precepts too often diametrically contradict each other, and the declarations of duty are enforced by no moral suasion. He that does not perform what he is required to perform, is liable not to any punishment for his disobedience, but only to a loss of the reward attendant upon compliance. The Bible throughout, on the other hand, is perfect as a code of moral precepts, defining clearly and authoritatively the duties of man to God, to himself, and to his fellow-creatures. Not content with a vague recommendation of virtue, it minutely lays down the details of our obligations ; and these precepts are not only taught but also exemplified. Christ tells us what we ought to do, and at the same time

shows us how it is to be done—while his lessons inform us of the duties which ought to be practised, his conduct convinces us that they are all practicable. And the performance of these obligations is enforced both by promises and threats—promises to the obedient, and threats to the uncomplying. We are surely not hazarding anything outrageously extravagant in maintaining, that the superiority of Christian ethics over those of the Vedānta, is in itself a sufficient argument to establish the point, that, as a religion adapted to the necessities and instruction of mankind, Christianity is far superior to her rival.

Vedantism further, attaches too much importance to shadows, leaving the substance unheeded, to be of much real utility. “All rites ordained in the Veds,” says Menu, “oblations to fire, and other sacrifices, pass away ; but that which passes not away is the *syllable* Om, the symbol of God;” and, with reference to the same term, says the Katha Upanishad, “Man having recourse to this *word* shall either be absorbed in God, or be revered like Bruhmu;” as if the repetition of a single word, whatever may be its supposed sanctity, were sufficient to purify one from crimes. Mark what counterpart Christianity presents to this:—“When the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.” It is not sufficient to utter the name of God repeatedly

over and over, and tire our lips—it is not enough even to reiterate our prayers; but we must bring our contrite hearts as a sacrifice to the Lord, and in words—no, not in words, but rather, in *unutterable* agony, with groanings of the spirit, ask for forgiveness.

So also Vedantism *speaks* of God always in the highest tone. We frequently meet with lofty conceptions of his attributes, expressed in striking and beautiful language, in many of the commentaries and strictures which treat of the subject. But when these glowing descriptions are analysed, when the perfection and sufficiency allowed to the Deity are attempted to be reconciled with the dogmas of the faith, alas ! there is nothing at bottom but “words, words, words.” He is *omnipotent*, but, except in the simple wish which gave birth to *máyá*, his omnipotence appears never to have exerted its energy. The world he created through the agency of that wish is an illusive world, because even he cannot create matter out of nothing. He is *omniscient*, but totally unencumbered with the cares of the world, and absorbed in his own unity; *all-perfect*, but having no positive moral qualities; *supremely happy*, but insensible as a clod of earth ! How correct and consistent, compared with this, is the representation of God in the pages of the Bible ! His absolute and supreme authority is therein everywhere asserted, and nowhere compromised; his infinite knowledge and wisdom are everywhere exalted; his paternal solici-

tude is described in terms the best calculated to make it endearing; and the perfection of his character is vindicated by the admission of the noblest qualities in their highest and inconceivable purity.

The adoration of God, as enjoined by the Vedānta, also, seems to us to be nothing more than a recognition of the existence of the Deity, and a meditation upon him in some such sense, we believe, as some grand metaphysical problems are meditated upon. He is directed to be sought by profound contemplation; but there is no religious or moral worship for Bruhmu. By devotion and virtuous practices, says the Mundaka Upanishad, the Supreme Being is not to be conceived. A dreamy and passive meditation is everywhere pointed out as the only way of knowing him. What this sort of worship, in a sound rational point of view can be conducive to, we see not. Controversies, writings and disputations can never reconcile it to the human heart. And hence, in the absence of other beliefs, has the Hindu mind so completely sold itself to a debasing superstition, thus virtually recognizing the claims of heroes and other earthly benefactors to their gratitude, in preference to those of an Almighty Creator, who is to be worshipped only by apathetic abstraction. Christianity, on the contrary, directs us to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength; and this constitutes the basis of the worship enjoined by Christian ethics—a worship simple enough for the

most illiterate mind, and at the same time satisfying the mightiest intellects.*

This world, again, according to the Vedánta, is all an illusion—this world, where man is placed to act, hedged with so many faculties, is nothing but a show—a picture—a dream, not metaphorically, but actually an illusion. This, as a theological speculation, is, to say the least of it, too mystical and refined, and followed out to its logical consequences, is more calculated to plunge us into scepticism than confirm us in religion. It is with reference to just such a hypothesis, that M. Cousin so very pertinently observes, that, “A God without a world is as false as a world without a God.” Christianity, too, speaks of the nothingness of this life, but quite in another sense. It points out to an eternal future, compared to which this is indeed a fleeting existence, and to be prepared for which is the consummation it upholds. But Vedantism holds out no individuated future existence to the knower of God. As a separate being he lives in this life alone, and this life is an illusion! Alas, for humanity!

But why is this world an illusion? What are your proofs that it is so? asks common sense of the

* The Bruhmú Subhá maintains that, according to the Vedánta also, God should be worshipped with gratitude, veneration and love. To this we can only answer, in the words of Colonel Vans Kennedy, that “such expressions as love and fear of God never occur in those sacred books, (the Veda,) nor in any Vedánta treatise, although the terms themselves are frequently used” to express a different meaning.

Vedantist. And what is his answer ? From spirit, says the subtle metaphysician, actual matter cannot be educed, and, as nothing else existed from everlasting but the spiritual first cause, nothing else exists at this moment but he. He could not have created the world without materials :—the world—the universe, is therefore a delusion ! The Bible, in noble contrast to these little subterfuges, maintains that God created the heavens and the earth, summoned them out of nothing by his Omnipotent mandate, and hung them out as witnesses of his power !

The idea of immortality, also, as inculcated by the Vedānta, even were it reconcileable with reason, is too speculative, superfine and curious to suit the nature of mankind. Dissolution of individual existence, “with faculties transcendent for enjoyment, but not for action,” is the greatest reward held out to man. The enfranchised spirit is for ever identified with the divine nature. “As rivers flowing merge into the sea, losing both name and form, so the knower of God, freed from name and form, merges in Him who is the excellence of all excellencies”—as bubbles bursting are lost on the parent stream, so is the spirit of man after death resolved in the immensity of God. This assuredly is very unsatisfactory. We agree with Jamadagni, who observed, that “the idea of losing a distinct existence, as a drop lost in the ocean, is abhorrent :” for after all, this much-coveted absorption is but a sort of annihilation. The futurity preached by Christ, though not so arrogant-

ly high, is far more attractive. It is, in fact, what Prithu, the grandson of Suaymbhuba, is stated to have preferred, when he rejected both the sorts of blessedness which the Vedánta offers, both absorption into Bruhmu, and pleasure with the minor deities in their paradise. "I neither want the one nor the other," said he, "but give me a place where I may hear and learn the glories of God."—"O God! I desire not absorption," said also Vilwa-mangala, the poet; "I ask for a distinct existence, and to be always near thee, my lord and master." That men endowed with intellects—philosophers, poets and sages—should have preferred any other condition, and that through successive ages, is indeed very strange. The Bible holds out just the sort of felicity which Prithu and Vilwa-mangala had longed for—a felicity satisfying the most exalted and enlarged desires of the heart, without partaking in nature with the Vedantist's impious aspiration. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

The idea of transmigration, also, which the Vedánta considers so well calculated to expiate guilt and wipe away sin, and which the Bruhmu Subhá exultingly upholds as offering "a better view of our prospect in future, and one more in accordance with our notions of justice and mercy acting in unison with each other," than the Christian idea of eternal rewards and punishments, judged prejudice apart,

must be pronounced as exceedingly absurd. It teaches man to believe that he is born under the influence of actions performed in a prior state of existence. If his circumstances in life are wretched, he is required to believe that it is a visitation of sins, committed when he was perhaps a Kalmuck Tartar, or a Mohican Indian, or may be a bird, or perchance a fish, or perhaps a horse. If he prosper, he is rewarded for the virtues he had done in like forms and conditions. But he retains no sense of his identity with the Kalmuck or the Mohican, nor with the bird, fish, or horse; and to all real purposes the Kalmuck, or the Mohican, the bird, fish, or horse is therefore neither rewarded nor punished, for they know nothing about the matter. It also encourages a spirit of procrastination in matters of religion, to which the human heart is all too prone. There can be no urgent necessity for making the most of our time, if besides this birth there be other opportunities of cultivating religion. "Let us enjoy our pleasures while we can," the sensualist will urge; "let me be ignorant for a season," will be the sluggard's excuse; "some other time we will make up our defection by our piety." Lastly, its dispensations are unjust. It suggests no solid hope of felicity to the good man after death. As a punishment for misdeeds done, transmigration holds out to the offender another opportunity for repeating them, and as a reward for virtuous actions, a repeated trial to the probationer, wherein one false step may annul past

merit, and remand him to the abodes of pain. It cannot therefore but surprise us, that this perpetual transition from bliss to pain, from good to evil, this endless round of births under the influence of merit and demerit, this long-drawn string of exits and entrances, whereby the human soul is made a dependent agent—dependent on the influence of the works of a former birth—that even this has been, by so many, preferred to the Bible account of the destiny of man, so congenial to his nature as an accountable and moral agent, that after death comes the judgment !

Then again, the exclusiveness of the Vedānta renders it constitutionally unfit, as an universal religion. The Veds are for the twice-born classes alone. The lower tribes are all debarred from the sacred books ; and not only these, but along with them, the whole female sex, or one-half of the human race. And the Vedānta cannot receive such to her bosom. Christianity, on the contrary, is for all men and women without exception—

“ Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast ;
 ’Tis free to all——— ”

But we need not continue the contrast further. We have said enough to establish the position that Christianity is, in every respect, better suited to humanize the mind, and better calculated to improve it, than the Vedānta ; which, though containing glimpses of the sublimest truths, and retaining terms and ideas expressive of high moral elevation, appears

to us to be altogether inadequate, as a religion, to meet the wants and necessities, the hopes and aspirations, of mankind. If all the arguments we have used be insufficient to shake the strong prejudices of our Neo-Vedantists, we would ask them only to examine the practical success of the Gospel, which is traced in characters too broad to be unnoticed, or misread, and to answer what counterpart the Vedānta has to offer to that. Christianity has vindicated the rights of nature, upset customs and practices which in former ages were a disgrace to the human character, mitigated the horrors of war, assuaged the evils of slavery, and put a stop to barbarous amusements and public licentiousness. Even where existing in its worst form, corrupted and abused, it has raised the standard of public morals far beyond what heathen philosophy, in its highest perfection, ever did there before. Never, in the days of Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato were the Grecians,—low as they are at this moment,—so high as a moral people as now, though Christianity amongst them is like a withered trunk—a rotten tree. Never, in the days of Brutus, Cato and Cincinnatus, were the Romans,—dark as their present corruption is,—more practically moral as a nation than now, even though perverted doctrines have marred amongst them all the sublimer features of Bible religion. All this has Christianity achieved, and all this has never been achieved by the Vedānta.

WOMEN IN INDIA;•

THEIR CONDITION AND CHARACTER.

PERHAPS no question relating to Indian manners has received more attention from, and is yet less generally known by Europeans, than the character and condition of the female sex in this country. The reserve of the natives generally on the subject is so great, that much information about it is not to be drawn out of them. According to the customs of the land women are never spoken of in company, and for a stranger to enquire about them is accounted either a mark of ignorance of the national customs, or a wilful infringement of them. Hence the great deficiency of knowledge amongst Europeans, respecting the condition of the female sex in a country in which they have sojourned so long. The notion currently prevalent amongst them that women hold a very mean position in Hindu society, and are neglected and despised, and exert little or no influence on the manners and morals of the people, is no doubt mainly correct. But they are for the most part entirely ignorant of a variety of interesting details about

their inner life, which throw much additional light upon the subject, and which therefore deserve to be more widely known. To collect these together, and offer them to the reader in one connected sketch, shall be the object of the following pages. India embraces such an extensive tract of country, and is peopled by so many tribes of men, that all attempts to generalize observations on them must be more or less open to objection. But our readers, we are sure, will give to our remarks all the latitude they require in their adaptation to the numerous sub-divisions in the land.

On the condition of unmarried women we have not much to dilate upon, as that condition embraces only a period of ten years reckoned from the earliest days of infancy. The birth of a female child is, for the most part, an undesired event in a native family. But they err who assert that female children are branded as sources of regret, and never smiled upon till they have been disposed of in marriage: such men have certainly never seen a Hindu nursery, or they would not have ventured on such an outrageous remark. If the Shāstras have considered it of importance to regulate nicely the estimation in which children of different sexes should be held; if the position of women in the country makes even the fondest father wish at heart that his girl had been a boy, it does not necessarily follow that the sex of his child is a perpetual torment to its parents; nor is it true that a female infant is slighted more pointedly in this

country than in other parts of the world. So far as children are concerned, all the world over there seems to be only one feeling on the subject—that is, that boys are preferred to girls; but not even in India has superstition, or custom, so far triumphed over nature, as to make a child any thing but dear unto its parents independent of its sex.

The sexes are very early separated in this country. At six or seven years no boy will put up with the impropriety of having a girl for his play-fellow; and girls often cease to mingle in the society of boys even in the nursery, if they can pick up friends of their own sex. How far the old remark, that sisters love their brothers better than they love each other, is correct we know not; but here sisters seem to prefer each other's company to that of their brothers. This is partly, if not entirely, owing to the dissimilarity of the training marked out for the sexes even at that age. Boys go to school to learn to read and write, or are set to those pursuits at home. But the culture of the intellectual powers of female children is not sought for by their parents. All the mental training imparted to them consists in the lectures given them by their mothers, which embrace a variety of subjects. Religion, such as exists in the land, has of course prominent attention paid to it; and hence the strong attachment to superstition and idolatry, which Hindu women evince so much more than the men. They believe in ghosts, omens and dreams more implicitly than the men, and

their credence in supernatural influences is so strong, that, to counteract their strength, and to preserve from them their children, gives them perpetual disquietude, no amount of precaution that can be taken being sufficient to quiet their unruly imaginations. The principles of propriety and decorum also, are early instilled into youthful female minds by careful mothers, and glimpses of their future destiny endeavoured to be communicated to them. All this information is given orally; but it is repeated so often, that no part of it fails to make a lasting impression on the mind. What a pity that such an assiduous and indefatigable mother should be narrow-minded, unfit to afford the rich aliment of useful instruction when the expanding mind of her child requires it! The girl learns only what the mother speaks, both singing, as it were, the same old song.

The sports and pastimes of girls also, are as dissimilar to those of boys as is their intellectual training. Now and then indeed, they are to be seen indulging in amusements common to both sexes. Swift as so many Atalantas, girls are often to be seen chasing each other; oftener still playing hide-and-seek with bandaged eyes, and with as much zeal and activity as boys. But these animated diversions are not legitimately their own. Those that belong to them especially and exclusively, are generally of a more sedentary character, and are also more ingenious; and their toys, for the most part representing men, women and children, engross all their attention. The boys, mis-

chievous as they are in all parts of the world, and naturally prone to play pranks, get out of the nursery as soon as they are allowed the freedom. But the girls are ever fond of nestling under the mother's wings at home, and, like their instructions, their amusements also are of an in-door character. They are not wanting in the playful gaiety of childhood ; but there is not much active animation in them, and no self-reliance. The daughter's elbow leans ever on the mother's breast. Mothers necessarily retain over their daughters the greatest authority, much greater than what they retain over their sons. Did mothers only know how to train up their daughters properly, the civilization of India would not be so hopelessly backward, at this moment, as it seems to be. The chief source of a nation's happiness is ever the domestic hearth, and the most effectual pioneers of a nation's improvement are women.

Bodily exercises for female children there are none. Even the exercises of Indian boys are tame, compared with the gymnastics of other nations ; and, as for women, they have no active exercises at all. But they are early taught to be useful, that in their husband's family they may not be jeered at as so many unprofitable bargains when they are married, and the exertions thus called forth answer the purposes of health sufficiently well. Dancing, riding and singing are objected to as improper accomplishments ; but sweeping the house, cleaning the utensils of the family, and even assisting at cookery are taught them as a part of

necessary training for fulfilling the duties they are bound to, and the healthiness of the employments almost entirely makes amends for their meanness. This preserves them from becoming entirely useless and indolent, and gives full exercise even to the strongest constitutions, improving both appearance and health. Pale cheeks and a languid aspect are rare amongst women in this country, while steady spirits and alert minds are quite common amongst them.

The habits thus taught in girlhood, give them a dexterity, which, however some might consider low and unfashionable, would surprise them not a little, if they were to witness it unawares. Clean-limbed and agile, a girl of eight years may be seen daily discharging duties, without consciousness of fatigue, which would almost require a laborer to get through, and it may be that the discharge of these duties goes far to accomplish those ends which elsewhere are sought to be accomplished by back-boards and dancing.

In India every useful member of society marries. The marriage state is considered essential, as well for one's personal usefulness, as for the interest of the community. Nothing is more urgent in a young man than to seek out a wife, and celibacy is considered so disreputable that it is almost unknown. As for women they *must* marry. It is a disgrace if one cannot find a husband, not only to herself but to her family. Daughters growing old under the paternal roof are no where to be seen, among the Kulin Bráhmans only excepted,

who have not the same facilities of marrying them away as the rest of the community. To be subservient to the wants and pleasures of men is recognised as the only aim and end of female existence. Women can have no aspiration beyond conjugal happiness : and it is believed impossible that a virgin state can be one of innocence. Solicitude is therefore early felt for the marriage of girls ; and arrangements are made about it at a time, when, in other countries, parents barely think of putting them to school.

As in Homer we find Achilles declaring that his father Peleus shall mate him with a bride, even so in India the union of children is entrusted entirely to their parents, and, when parents are dead, to grandfathers, brothers or guardians, the parties to be married having no vote in the matter. The business-part of the transaction is generally conducted by professional match-makers, who are well versed in Hindu genealogy, and are often entrusted with the whole matter, from carrying the first proposals of the union, to arranging the final adjustment of the marriage settlements, parents concerning themselves only in the more delicate duty of picking and choosing. Generally these match-makers are men, but of late women also have embraced the profession, and from the privilege they enjoy of having access to the Zenana, they are for the most part more successful in their business than their male competitors. As to selecting and rejecting, parents generally discharge

the duty conscientiously enough, and it were uncharitable to suspect otherwise. We are firmly persuaded, that the considerations usually weighed and resolved by them, are such as are best calculated to ensure the growth of connubial happiness and love; and, in point of fact, we believe that there is quite as large a proportion of well-matched couples in India as any where else. In Europe, the husband and wife study each other's temper, inclinations and turn of mind before they are united for good. This gives the parties a freedom of choice. But, alas for such freedom! Lovers' eyes are blind. They see not objects in their real light. They marry, and marriage dissipates the false brilliance that had hitherto dazzled their discretion. Too much of good had been seen before, but reality now disappoints expectation, and the disappointment is great. For lovers to choose, therefore, is, after all, but a fallacious privilege, and to it, we fear, is to be attributed the extensive unhappiness resulting from European marriages. To mitigate the evil, Dr. Johnson proposed that all marriages should be made by the Lord Chancellor, upon the only consideration of character and circumstances. As one Lord Chancellor would have too much to do with such a work on hand, the plan followed in this country is entitled to preference, where the natural Lord Chancellors of families are entrusted with the matter, with absolute and final authority. Much time and trouble is saved by the process, and all the advantages foreseen by the learned doctor ensured.

All women, homely or handsome, are provided for. An English maiden, versed in literature and the arts, does not often get a market at all. But the most ignorant Hindu girl never has to wait behind her time. And as for love, "Marry first, and love will come after," is the motto; and, to the best of our belief, love does come after in most cases. No two persons, connected by the ties of ordinary friendship, can live constantly together, for many years, without feeling for each other more kindness than they commenced with, and when two of different sexes do it, the result must be stronger while alike. If wooing amongst Europeans be sweeter than marriage, as poets have sung, Hindu marriages in general must be happy ones, for wooing follows the union, and never precedes it. The marriage state is one long wooing in India.

As to the observation of the Abbé Dubois, that to marry, or to buy a wife, are synonymous in this country, we can only say that he should have known better, if he means that as a general remark. Undoubtedly cases do occur in which there is great inequality of age between the parties connected together, or, in which, except the wealth of the husband's family, there is no other consideration to prefer him. But in what part of the world does this not happen? Generally the character and qualifications of the bridegroom are examined with particular care on the one side, and also the state of his health, and his prospects in life; and the beauty, address, man-

ners and disposition of the little bride are as particularly enquired after, on the other,—these being her chief accomplishments in a country where she is withheld from knowledge. In some cases, the increase of family distinction and worldly importance is also consulted on both sides. What then? How does that reflect against the arrangement, so long as the primary considerations, above mentioned, are not neglected? Money matters are perhaps in many cases discussed largely, but that is a good custom. In this age of practical living, people cannot live on air, and it is desirable that enquiries should be made before marriage whether the man marrying has a house to keep his wife in, and means to feed her. The Abbé also says, that he has never seen two Hindu marriages that really united the hearts of the parties closely. No, not at the time, Abbé, for then they are children; but we will undertake to cite three instances of happy matches amongst the Hindus, for every two any person, in support of the Abbé's assertion, will point out to us amongst the European community. We are prepared to admit that Hindu husbands do frequently prove heartless truants, but certainly not more so than husbands in England, France and Italy. Husbands closely united to their wives are scarce, we fear, all over the world, even for all the "love-passages" that precede marriage in many countries.

The real evil in Hindu marriages consists rather in the sufferance of polygamy. According to the

more ancient practice of the country, a second wife was only taken when the first had been found barren, or had proved frail. But, in imitation of the Mahomedan conquerors, a plurality of wives has since been regarded rather as a luxury for all who can afford it, than as a provision only for the few whose first wives were ill-chosen. Like all luxuries, however, it is far from being really enviable. A man must have more than ordinary patience indeed, who can live with more than one wife in peace. The poor never think of it. Though the wish for children is, for obvious reasons, stronger in them than in rich people, they cheerfully stick to their barren consorts, in preference to an adventure so pregnant with trouble. One only class there is in Hindu society, who systematically keep up the practice, and to them it is a source of gain. In ordinary cases, it is the husband that furnishes food and raiment to his wife, and shields her from distress; but in these extraordinary cases, the rule is reversed. The Kulin Bráhmans are regular diners-out, and to find lodging and entertainment wherever they go, and feed all the year round at the expense of others, they marry as many wives as they can get, and, on account of the supposed sanctity of their order, get as many as they will take. This freedom to do evil is of recent acquisition. There was a time when a Bráhmaṇ could marry his daughter as he liked, and, so long as it was a Bráhmaṇ she was married to, there was nothing to say against the union. But now, times

are changed. Since the days of Bulál Sen, king of Gour, the Bráhmans have been divided into sections, and marriages being regulated accordingly, the range of selection has become circumscribed ; and hence the difficulty of getting good matches for girls, without prejudice to the genealogy of their class. The Kulin Bráhmans, as the highest in the scale of precedence, are sedulously sought by all. The matrimonial exploits of this class are so extraordinary, that, a few years ago, it was by no means uncommon to meet with men having so many as *fifty* wives ; and even now, though such daring heroes are become more scarce, they are yet to be met with, occasionally, in Bengal. But as it is impossible that their love can be as diffusive as their engagements, the morals of their ladies are very much suspected. But of that anon.

Of the nuptial ceremonies, it cannot be necessary for us to speak in detail. The Hindus consider them very significant and beautiful, but, in our judgment, most of the rites are eminently childish, and none of them impress any deep sense of the sacred engagements they confirm. We will therefore, at once pass over to the bride's first introduction into her husband's family,—an event too important in the life of a Hindu woman to be unnoticed. A crowd of puerile and absurd ceremonies are also connected with this, but these likewise we shall omit to mention. When the new married bride comes to her husband's house in his company, all the members of the family,—men,

women and children,—come forth, as it were, in a delirium of joy, to welcome them, and some absurd rites and observances over, the seniors give them presents and benedictions, and all by turns gaze on the face of the little stranger, the men of the family doing this for the first time and the last. This over, seclusion and inanity immediately follow. Under her husband's roof, it is not genteel for a new married wife to be boisterous in the amusements of her age, and, though she is not separated from the intercourse of other children of the family, she often finds the abode comfortless for all the affectionate greetings of sisters-in-law and other playmates. Though repeatedly spoken to on the subject from childhood by her mother, and other female friends at home, yet never practically habituated to it till now, her imprisonment chafes her little mind, and makes her weep, and her tears sometimes secure her more liberty, or she is sent back to the house of her parents for a while.

The wife occupies an important position in her husband's household. For a time indeed, she plays a very subordinate part. A young woman generally, has no influence, except it be over her husband. She is looked upon as a minor by the rest of the family, even after the law has ceased to regard her as such. But nevertheless, she has all the external tokens of respect paid to her: and when in time, she becomes the mistress of the family, she makes the most important figure in the group, is the prime mover, in fact,

of every great event within the domestic circle, and has the highest and most honorable station in it. Of every thing within doors, she is the uncontrolled despot. Her voice is final, her order not to be set aside. The servants of the Zenana are all under her control ; she allots to every one his peculiar task ; and the internal regulations of the family are all laid down by her. Even the worst of husbands has a complete confidence in her management, and never interferes with her arrangements ; nor could he, if he would, unless he could be the housekeeper and the cook himself, which would make him quite as ridiculous as assuming the *saree* and bangles of his wife. And it is difficult to conceive more affectionate reliance and trust than a good husband feels in the care and superintendence of his wife.

Generally she does not attain this pre-eminence in her youth. It is not a mere sacrifice at the shrine of beauty. But she enjoys it long. When youth and sprightliness have both worn away, the mistress of the family still retains her power. The homage she has been habituated to receive is never withdrawn. Even the most beautiful new importation into the Zenana never supersedes in authority, however she may in affection, the first wife, when her features are deformed with wrinkles ; and the old mother-in-law not only exercises her legitimate power, but is even suffered to tyrannize over the wives of her children, long after the death of her husband, and the decay of her wisdom.

But this patriarchal pre-eminence within the domestic circle is not always an easy burthen. In itself it is very vexatious, and the absence of a cultivated mind depriving the Hindu wife of one great source of serenity, makes it much more annoying than it would otherwise be. She is conscious of her responsibility; but how to discharge the duties it involves she knows not. Great solitudes and great exertions are intertwined with her duties, often much greater than fall to the lot of woman in other countries. The domestic duties in this country include the charge of children, which Hindu mothers do not consider to be sufficiently performed by placing them in the custody of nurses. In fact the fashion of keeping nurses, after the European model, can hardly be said to have yet entered the Zenana; and the nursery is not only superintended, but almost exclusively managed by the mother, even in the richest families. Of course the children are suckled by her; for she cannot endure that another woman should have even a pretext to dispute the quality of mother with her; and many doubt if the quality and temperament of the nurse are not imbibed with her milk by the child. Her animal love for her children is so great, that, we were almost about to say, it compensates, if that could be, for her intellectual insufficiency to model the growth of the ductile mind. If maternal tuition is nonsense, we must not attribute that to indifference, but to ignorance; for no where is maternal love more strong,

or maternal care more assiduous, than in this country.

St. Paul tells us that "to guide the house" is the chief duty of a married woman, and we doubt if in any part of the world, the Apostle's injunction is more strictly observed than in this. Nay, we fear that Hindu women push compliance with the requisition to an extreme extent, neglecting, if not injuring themselves, in guiding the house, degrading themselves into drudges, in their anxiety to be good housewives. They rise early in the morning, long before the sun, and yet their work is never over when he goes down to his rest. The employment of the poorer classes includes the preparation of fuel from cow-dung, fetching water from the rivers and tanks for all domestic purposes, and going to market; and their leisure hours are employed in spinning cotton, which is certainly not an exemption from labor. It affords to many families their means of living, and occupation to all, and is an ample substitute for the arts of knitting and sewing, which are not practised amongst them. Many, belonging to the lowest orders of society, are also to be seen laboring from day to day, along, and in company with men, in occupations which are unfeminine and toilsome. In the country they are employed in cultivating the fields, and in carrying their produce to fairs and markets; in towns and cities some may be seen pounding brick-dust, others carrying bricks on their heads, where building is going on, others pounding rice. These services require

much endurance and labor, and expose those who are thus employed, to bad company and temptations.

The rich of course have no such work to perform. In the different grades of society, the duties of the female sex very considerably differ in this as in other countries, and perhaps more in this, than in countries more advanced in intellect and refinement. Here a difference in outward circumstances places the rich and the poor in situations very dissimilar, large means doing for some, what a general refinement has not yet achieved for all. No rich man's wife is ever employed in fetching water, or in drying cow-dung ; even spinning, which in Greece was, in primitive ages, not disdained even by queens and princesses, is not in fashion amongst them ; and pounding rice and brick-dust are of course out of the question. And yet, though spared from servile labor, we are not to conclude that they are exempted from much exertion. The vulgar details of the family management, which fall to the lot of all women, high or low, give them much to do, and in those families where the women are few in number, and where the operations of the kitchen have not yet been transferred to servants, they may even be said to be oppressive. The men think lightly of them, as all may who are not required to drudge themselves ; but we doubt if they would retain such indifference long had they to work instead of their wives. It is notorious that men form the largest share of the unemployed population in this country, not women.

A proper discharge of her multifarious duties hardly leaves a Hindu wife any time to waste, and hence idle lives and luxurious habits are rather uncommon within the Zenana. The rich having servants to assist them, have indeed, more leisure than the poor; and, being shut out from all intellectual applications and graver studies, their employment is, it must be admitted, sometimes somewhat frivolous and trifling, and not always in due subordination to domestic usefulness. But this frivolity seldom has opportunities of being so long indulged as to settle down into a pernicious failing.

To dress and show, Hindu women do allot a portion of their time. The philosopher was right who defined woman to be "an animal fond of dress." But the time thus set aside is very short indeed, compared with what European ladies devote to the same. The toilette of a Hindu wife is very simple, and her art seldom aspires to improve on nature. As she neither expects compliments nor admirers, not to appear slovenly is her only ambition. She combs her hair and adorns her person. What woman does not? In India long hair in women is highly esteemed, and cutting off the hair is a disgrace and a punishment for incorrect behaviour. The wife takes a delight in braiding her dark tresses; but powders and pomatums are unknown, and she studiously avoids ringlets and curls. The body also receives some attention, but does not require much. Hindu women wear no stays, and they do not paint their cheeks or their

eye-brows. Rouge is unknown, and the *surma* is not used by respectable females. Painting the feet red, is the only painting of the person that seems to be in fashion in respectable circles. Nor do they usually load themselves with ornaments, as has been asserted by many writers. Except on occasions of festivity, when every woman, naturally enough, vies to outdo others in ostentation and splendour, ornaments are not much worn, though the honor of having many ornaments is generally very much coveted by all, perhaps, in some cases, from the ulterior motives of securing an independence. For the most part these ornaments are very clumsy, and much too jingling and glittering for grown up ladies. We could tolerate them in children, but they are too flimsy even for women. They are however, not the less precious for that. Not seldom each fair wearer bears on her graceful neck and arms half her lord's wealth, sometimes more; and, on festive occasions, when many such are met together, it may be mentioned, without much exaggeration, that an emperor's ransom is displayed amongst them.

The raiment of Hindu women consists of one entire piece of cloth, uncut and unsewed, which is wound round the body in a manner so as to cover the whole, including the head. Though much more convenient than the dress of European ladies, and far better adapted to the climate, and to the menial service they have to perform, we cannot help condemning it on the score of decency, as it hardly con-

ceals the symmetry of the body, and, in some places, as in Bengal, where thin muslins are in fashion, scarcely serves as covering at all. Some have lauded the excellence of the costume, because, in displaying the body, it leaves no room for deception, while doing full justice to nature. But it exhibits too much of nature, we fear, and, though undoubtedly well adapted for the statuary's model, is not as well suited for the every-day decorum of life. An artist, for palpable reasons, might well prefer to represent a Venus de Medicis naked; but what husband, in admiration of the living marble, would think of disencumbering his wife of her drapery, as so much useless encumbrance? It is a libertine mind only, that can perceive excellence in the allotments of a Hindu female dress. If intermixture with society had been permitted to Hindu women, we are certain that this dress would not have survived long; for no man would have agreed to his wife, clothed according to the fashion now prevalent in the Zenana, appearing in public amongst strangers; nor would women, who have always a nice and accurate sense of propriety, adhere to it, even if they did. In those provinces where women have more liberty than in Bengal, the *pyjama* and the *pyrahan* of the Mahomedans have long displaced the Hindu *saree*, and the *peishwaz*, also, most nearly resembling the robe of English women, has come into use amongst certain classes, though it has not been generally adopted by all. But as yet, in Bengal, we see little tendency towards

any such refinement, and the simple robe of a long, bygone age is still in fashion, the modesty of the women contrasting strangely with their often semi-transparent drapery. Sewed cloths are forbidden by the Shástras, and sewing also. In the Upper Provinces the interdiction is not much regarded. But in the Lower Provinces the Bráhmans still adhere to the requisition of the text, and so do the women of all the different tribes. When the cloth they wear is rent, they have only two alternatives, either to go ragged, or to change the linen, mending being out of the question. Nor do Hindu women wear any sort of shoes, slippers or sandals to protect their feet. We are not the advocates of vain dressing, but grace and modesty by nature belong unto women, and we do not like to see these outraged by bad taste and senseless texts.

The conversation of Hindu women is for the most part shallow, frivolous and frothy, and not seldom corrosive and bitter. Profound and tranquil it rarely is, and this indicates, not indifferently, the emptiness of their minds. Men, in this country, never converse with women on subjects of importance. The husband, when talking to his wife, carefully shuns every discourse that might require the exercise of reason. He discusses with her only household affairs and domestic matters, such as about the merits of the cookery, or the cleanliness of the house, or her ornaments, or her dress. But every circumstance that requires a cultivated mind to appreciate, he care-

fully and habitually eschews. A supine vacuity of thought is the necessary result. Petty anecdotes of the neighbourhood, local gossip, scandal—the idler's theme all over the world, are what women constantly interchange with each other ; in their absence nonsense supplies them a never failing stock, always welcome, because never requiring the exercise of effort or intelligence. And every to-morrow is a repetition of to-day.

Of exclusive in-door amusements, Hindu women have but few. For girls there are plenty of diversions, but those for grown-up girls are scarce; and, when these have no domestic drudgery on hand, as happens frequently to the ladies of rich families, and likewise to all in those families where there are many widows to divide the domestic toil among themselves, time hangs heavy indeed on their hands, and they are obliged to create enjoyments to diversify the listlessness of their lives. The prejudices of the country, however, do not exclude them from witnessing, in secrecy, the public amusements held at the time of the great festivals in the houses of all who can afford them. These, indeed, are often of a character more deserving to be reprobated and condemned, than honored with the presence, screened though it be, of women. Amusements stained with blood, worse still, spectacles almost calculated to seduce and corrupt virtue, sights and scenes grossly indelicate, are thus attended by women. So long as they are screened, the tone and sentiment of society

upbraid them not. The most considerate parent sees no risk in suffering his daughter to prostitute her ears with the unprincipled mirth ; the most jealous husband thinks not of recalling his wife from an entertainment which insults her ears with language and sentiment of a tendency undisguisedly pernicious. That there is much of mirth, wit or pathos in these revelries we will not be bold enough to advance, but there is not a small tincture of indelicacy in them, as all who have seen them must admit. Prostitutes often take part in these entertainments. Where they do not, boys are made to personate the female characters, and they always do this pretty indecently. Why this does not lead to a general depravation of morals we are incompetent to divine, unless it be, that they are not of constant occurrence, and the temptation is not a prolonged one.

Against the other in-door amusements of Hindu women, we have nothing to say, except that they are frivolous, and are, we are afraid, pursued to excess, especially the playing at cards, and similar diversions, by those women of rich families who have not much work on hand. An excessive fondness for such amusements soon degenerates into a habit, and then wherein does it differ from gambling ? Hurtful under such circumstances to all minds, it must be especially so to minds not properly cultivated, which thus almost run the chance of being brought down to the level of brutishness. A well-regulated life never requires much sport to engross it, for it never has a

large vacuum. Innocent diversions, now and then, are all very good in their way, but to be innocent, they must be now and then, not ever.

Besides these amusements, Hindu women have many superstitious rites and observances to engross their time and attention. These, for the most part, have for their object, the future happiness of the performer; but a considerable number are, also, observed to render a woman a mother, and not a few to propitiate the blessings of heaven on her husband and children. The ceremonies are puerile, consisting chiefly in gifts to Bráhmans, or their females; and the details about them it is not necessary to inflict on the reader. For unmarried girls, also, there are separate rites to perform, whereby to secure comely and indulgent husbands; but there are none for widows, who are only not excluded from making gifts to Bráhmans. These observances, one and all, attest but too powerfully, the intellectual degradation of the sex.

A very good insight into the within-door condition of Hindu women is also afforded us by the architecture of Hindu edifices. The dwelling-houses of all private individuals, great or small, are divided into two sets of apartments; one for the men, and the other for the women. The women's apartments are for the most part much less convenient, particularly as respects air and light, than those reserved for their lords. Small grated windows and lofty walls keep out both air and light; and the entrance to the department is

not easily practicable to strangers, the door never communicating directly with the street. This is sacred ground. Within this retirement, and entirely separated from the men, live the females of India. They never come out into the male quarters; nor ever leave their own, except when invited out, at the house of relatives, on festive or other occasions, when they proceed thither in close-covered palkees, lest they should be seen by strangers. They have therefore, never any opportunity of satisfying the natural curiosity of looking about them, except what the sliding doors of the palkee, slightly parted, afford them on these rare occasions; and the knowledge of men and things gleaned by these casual peepings in the streets, furnish many a subject of earnest discussion in the Zenana for months, so ignorant are its inmates of the world. This elucidates at once the feelings and prejudices of the people. Walls and windows are but indications of the mind. Female purity and virtue are peculiarly valued in the land, and the slightest suspicion against a wife's or daughter's correctness would be ruinous to the prospects and character of a whole family. Hence the rigid seclusion, more rigid in proportion to respectability and wealth. We know not how much rectitude profits by this confinement, but, we are sure that it shuts out woman from every independent employment.

Nor is it only from intercourse with strangers that women in India are debarred. They cannot freely associate even with all the men of the family. Walls

shut them out from the world ; the rules of propriety again shut them out from many, whom walls do not exclude from their ken and knowledge. From every person of superior rank in the family they turn aside their faces, and cover them ; and this is as well a mark of respect, as of modesty. The wife cannot even accost her own husband in the presence of others, nor he notice her. A man makes himself ridiculous if he speaks to his wife affectionately before a third person, and the wife is considered shameless who responds to such familiarity. Custom and strange ideas of propriety require them to feign a coldness and reserve, which in reality of course exists not. Nay, young married people cannot even see each other as often as they might wish to do so. They are only brought together at night, and parted again in the morning, as if their union was altogether a clandestine one. The only male relatives in her husband's family, whom the Hindu wife can notice openly, and at all times, are her husband's younger brothers, and all children. Intimacy with any other is infallibly set down as criminal, and platonic attachments are neither formed nor understood. Thus situated, the forming or improving the general manners, dispositions and conduct of men, even of her own family, fall not, as in other lands, on her.

From mixing in society Hindu women, as a body, are especially interdicted ; and this interdiction is an indiscriminatingly strict one. Even with the friends of the family they are forbidden to communicate ;

nay, verily, it is held indelicate on the part of those friends to enquire about them, except by indirect hints. In all but the nearest relatives, it is an affront to ask about the health of the members of the Zenana. "Are *all* of the house well," is the utmost the oldest friend can venture to enquire, and from any but the oldest friends, even this question would sound strange. In favor of such rigid customs we have not a word to advance ; but we like very much that Hindu women are regular "keepers at home," for to them that is the gorgon-shield of Pallas, by which to change foes into stone. Under the present state of Hindu society, female delicacy and reserve could not but suffer by out-door excursions. No woman, in any country, was ever rendered a better wife or mother from gadding habits, and those who are suffered to wander from house to house, in this country—a liberty which many widows enjoy—certainly do not, by their conduct, advance much the cause of such freedom. Busy bodies as they are, they wander hither and thither only to speak scandal, and such other stuff as they ought not to speak ; and they foment many an unnecessary quarrel by their uncalled for interference. Many of them besides, are very defective in their morals ; and it would much better become them all, and profit them more too, if they minded their own concerns at home, even though to inform the mind is not among their domestic employments. Women of this class, also, in large numbers attend the public festivals, often forming by far the greater portion of the throng ;

and they go to visit idols at distant shrines, forming their journeys promiscuously with men. They are likewise, to be seen every morning, throughout the year, performing their ablution in the sacred streams, publicly and promiscuously with men,—a custom so objectionable, that we are not a little surprised to see the sensitive Hindu look upon it with indifference. We are quite prepared to admit that these lustrations are for the most part performed with great modesty, the women bathing completely dressed, and never, by look or word, communicating with the other sex. But still, coming out of the river in wet drapery, which adhering to the body closely, gives to it all the appearance of perfect nakedness, savours too much of indelicacy for us not to notice it ; and the changing of garments, also, though performed with the greatest address, often exposes the body beyond what even the rules of Indian decorum would justify. At no distant time, in the warm reservoir at Bath, in England, the sexes bathed together. The practice was a bad one. But their wet clothes, or an exposure of the body perhaps, never disgraced it.

In all countries marriage draws a broad line of discrimination separating the female sex into two classes ; but in India, that line of demarcation merges in the wide line, which nature has marked out to distinguish the child from the girl. Widowhood marks a broader line of discrimination here, separating the mass of the sex into two classes, having duties and

trials of very dissimilar character. We shall therefore examine the widow's life and responsibility apart from the condition of married women.

Bad as the lot of married women may be, it is the happiest condition that can befall her in this country; and it is always reckoned in the light of a reward for virtue. The women themselves admit no blessedness to be greater than dying in the married state. The very name of widow is a reproach; and when women quarrel with one another, and when their mutual hatred becomes deadly, they can conceive no greater abuse than wishing each other to survive their husbands. Widows, however young, cannot re-marry. They are excluded from all scenes of gaiety and all ceremonies of rejoicing. Their appearance at marriages is never solicited, and where, on account of their near relationship, they do appear, they are not permitted to take any active part in the rites and ceremonies connected with them. They are not permitted to wear ornaments. Immediately after the death of her husband, the wife strips off all her jewels, and renounces them for ever, often selling them at once and converting the property into cash. Nor are widows permitted to dress themselves in colored clothing, or in any robe which is not absolutely white. Of these, and of every other emblem or privilege of matrimony, they are forthwith divested. To appear slovenly is meritorious; and they are bound to keep frequent fasts, that the cravings of the flesh may be thereby subdued. From these fasts

neither age nor infirmity can exempt them—nay, not even illness, except when it is very serious. “Let the widow emaciate her body by living on roots, fruits and flowers,” says Menu, “let her not even pronounce the name of another man after her lord is deceased ; let her continue till death forgiving injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding sensual pleasures, and practising virtue.”

The number of widows amongst the natives is very great. In many families the widows considerably out-number the married women. As old widowers are constantly re-marrying, and as the girls they marry seldom exceed the tender age of ten, the cause of this is certainly not inexplicable. An old husband of fifty has but small chance of surviving a girl of ten or eleven years, and, amongst Kulin Bráhmans, one such old man has often a plentiful harvest of little wives. Hence not unfrequently girls find themselves in the most miserable condition before they have become women, and even such cannot re-marry. The prejudices of the country will not permit the idea being thought of even for a moment, and this is the origin of much misery within the family circle.

In those families in which widows abound, the labour of female domestic servants is almost entirely dispensed with. The idea of employing widows so as to render their labours subservient to their maintenance, naturally suggests itself to those who are burdened with their charge. Except in rich families, where their *stridhan*, or inalienable personal property,

often amounts to a little independence, continual labour is invariably exacted from them. They draw water from the wells, or seek it at a distance from tanks and rivers; and they cook also, and sweep the house clean. And, in such families, married women are, for the most part, free from severe toil and servitude. But it often happens that a widow burdens her relatives not only with herself, but with a numerous offspring. Young wives become young mothers, and at the age of twenty there are often five or six children to support. However much the widow might be anxious to evince her gratitude by toil, it is not in her power, under such circumstances, to devote herself entirely to the family drudgery.

Domestic irregularity cannot altogether fail in a country where the number of widows is so great, and where the youths generally are not exactly well trained. But, as the Abbé Dubois observes, Hindu women are "naturally chaste," and it is, we believe, to this circumstance, that we should attribute the fact, that the violation of honor is much rarer amongst them, than, from the state of the case, might be inferred. Notwithstanding that young widows have it not in their power to re-marry, the disorders engendered by the prohibition are far from being frequent. Perhaps the severity of their condition, the weakening influence of their diet, the reserve in which they are brought up, their great distance from the contagion of evil examples, their entire seclusion from men except of the family, and the vigilance and

attention with which their behaviour is looked after, smother that propensity for indulgence so natural to the animal frame. Be that as it may, though the causes are unknown, the fact is not to be gainsayed; and we dwell upon it more particularly, because many ill-informed writers have unsparingly levelled their triumphant philippics against the character of Hindu women, and an ill-judging public have accepted their palatable exaggerations, in preference to the less startling testimony of sober truth.

When we say that depravity of manners is uncommon amongst Hindu widows, we of course mean to assert, that amongst married women it is yet more scarce. A faithful wife, in the extravagant language of the Śāstras, is enjoined to look with disdain even on the most beautiful amongst the gods, as contrasted with her wedded lord; and verily, for the most part, conjugal attachment, on the side of the wife, is as exemplary in India, as the text requires it. Though their religion does not, and cannot teach them, the full enormity of the crime, still the lines of severance between the sexes is so rigidly drawn, and the infamy and shame which attach to an erring wife are so great, as to be quite sufficient to preserve Hindu women in the way of rectitude. We do not delight to talk scandal, but it is by no means a secret, that in Europe, principally on the continent, it is not uncommon for a young married woman to receive the most ardent love-letters from her admirers. We dare say such intimacies are always kept within due bounds.

But here it is impossible to cultivate such intimacies at all. Then again, amongst European nations a departure from correctness, even when generally known, is never more than hinted at. Though "an erring sister's shame" is no where pardoned, slander has in most countries a silent tongue. But in India, the reproach and insult is always loudly published. Not only evil deeds done, but acts suspected are bruited with stentorian lungs, whenever there is any quarrel or disagreement to provoke the exposure. Of such pitiless storms no adequate idea can be expressed on paper. Women are here, therefore, doubly careful in their behaviour, that the rules of propriety and modesty, according to the notions of the country, may not be even ostensibly violated. There are many women, who, when their husbands go abroad, give up their ordinary decorations for the time, and live in as slovenly a manner, as the superstitious observances connected with the marriage state will permit.

That transgressions against chastity nevertheless do occur, it would be absurd to deny. Where married women are concerned, it chiefly happens in the families of Kulin Bráhmans, of whom we have already spoken. As the wives of these miscreants are often married only in name, or visited at distant intervals of time, it is hardly surprising to find them dishonoring their beds. "A wife is a benefice obliging to residence," said the clergyman's lady to her husband, when he was taking leave of her to go afar on busi-

ness; and of course wives, in all countries, entertain the same notions about their privileges. If walls and strict customs protect them from temptations in some countries, they are not impregnable barricades. From circumstances of similar character, widows also are frequently misled, much more frequently, we fear, than married women. Destitution, too, leads many widows astray, who having no body to shield them, and being under the necessity of seeking a livelihood, often do so at the expense of virtue: and the impossibility of concealing the consequences of their frailty, many times plunges them in greater crimes in attempting to conceal the less. In other countries, the reputation of a frail widow is tinkered sufficiently well by subsequent marriage with her lover. But the impossibility of such re-marriages leaves only two alternatives to the Hindu widow, betwixt which to choose, a blasted reputation, or the murder of her unborn child; and, brought up to no well-digested principles of religion, she most frequently, or rather always, chooses the latter, in preference to the former.

This brings us to the great question regarding the re-marriage of Hindu widows. There can be but one opinion on the subject; it is not a two-sided question; and yet, the casuistry of authors has created arguments in support of a prohibition monstrous and irrational. The Abbé Dubois says, that amongst the inferior castes, who permit the re-marriage of widows, he has observed a great portion of girls remaining in a single state for life, not being at all sought in marriage.

But the apparent equality of the sexes in numbers, in India, suggests to us the conviction, that the Abbé's observation must have been somewhere or other at fault; and it is impossible that it can be correctly applied as a general one, in a country like this, where every man takes a wife, and some two and more. The assumption, therefore, that in the ordinary course of society a part of the women must be without husbands, is fundamentally wrong; and the conclusion, that it is better that unmarried girls should have one trial, than widows two or more, necessarily comes to the ground, the question not coming to that issue at all. Further, "Never marry a vidder, Sam," is by no means a prejudice peculiar to the Wellers. Unmarried girls and their advocates, therefore, need be under no great apprehensions of entirely losing their chances from the competition of widows.

But, at the present juncture, the re-marriage of widows, however devoutly it might be wished for, cannot be consummated without the interference of the legislature. Nay, start not, reader, we are not going to ask the Governor General in Council to make the re-marriage of widows compulsory. We only solicit protection; not coercion. If a widow wishes to re-marry, if a young man agrees to accept her, notwithstanding the mutual wish, notwithstanding the concurrence of their parents, friends and kin, should all parties so agree, the union cannot yet take place, for there is no provision in the Shāstras authorising it; and this impracticability of it has, we

fear, served greatly to strengthen the prejudices of a bygone age. Widows dare not wish a re-marriage when they know, that, it being impossible to effect it, the wish would only expose them to derision ; men dare not offer themselves to widows, for that, under present circumstances, would be tantamount to offering them an insult. A re-marriage under the Hindu law cannot take place, and the law admits not of being altered ; and the marriage ceremony unperformed, the children born of such union would have all the legal disabilities of bastardism. The only method by which this can be avoided, and the nuptial ceremonies performed, is by the would-be husband and wife becoming converts to Christianity. But this is a matter of faith, and all are not prepared for it. Why should not the Government come forward and enact that the re-marriage of Hindu widows, if performed according to some form that might be prescribed, shall be valid, for all legal purposes, and thus legitimize the children born of such wedlock. Perhaps this might raise a hue and cry at first, as being an infringement of the pledge of non-interference with native prejudices, and what not, which the government has bound itself to observe. But this is a bugbear the Government cannot seriously apprehend. Surely the Government has given no pledges renouncing the privilege of doing good. Securing a large portion of the sex from becoming a burden, or a disgrace to society, is a deed well worthy of a Christian administration. Nor would the

interference suggested be at all of an active character. Further, it is by no means a compliment to the British rule, that, of the prejudices of a bigotted people, it is so excessively tender.

As a long inculcated prejudice exists against their re-marriage, we would not wonder, if even the women should consider our proposition as one calculated to degrade them. But we have the most sanguine expectations, that this prejudice will wear out in time; for it does not want much shrewdness or talent to perceive that re-marriage is better than prostitution, which scandal says, is much more common amongst widows than amongst married women; and, even if scandal tells a lie, the advantages of re-marriage cannot long remain unappreciated by them, who have experienced both the joys of married life, and the self-tormenting austerities of widowhood. They who have had the best opportunities to judge of both conditions, will surely not persist long to err in evincing their preference. Men in this country, who have once tasted the honey of connubial happiness, are never slow in renewing the contract as often as it is broken; and why should women be more shy?

On the whole, it is pretty clear that the condition of women in India is not a very enviable one. If widows are immersed in a lower deep than married women, it does not follow that the depth occupied by the latter is not an ignoble one. There are no doubt grades in the disesteem in which the different sections

of the sex are held, but the whole body participate in the slight—not one is exempted from it. A thousand little incidents prove this. Much stress has been laid on the fact of wives not joining their husbands at dinner. But this can be explained away as a mere matter of etiquette, which differs considerably in different countries, and of which different notions are entertained by different individuals.* And there may be some other criteria honored by general acceptance amongst Europeans, which are equally inconclusive. But the circumstances proving the point are many. The excellence of woman unmarried, married or widowed, throughout the country, among great and small, is rated only at the scale of servile fear, and capacity for endurance and toil. The best wife is she, who, with superior diligence, endures all the hardship of servants; and the best of daughters she, who perseveringly learns all the mysteries of pickling and preserving, cooking and boiling, which comprise the measure of female perfection. Then again, a man acting in an improper manner is twitted as a woman, and a husband influenced by the advice of his wife, is held in much greater scorn than usually falls to the lot of henpecked husbands in other parts of the globe. The respective position of the sexes is, also, very invidiously defined in all the written records of the land. Women have no ways pointed out to them by which to distinguish themselves, or to

* Lord Byron could not endure to see women eat.

rise to eminence, the never-ceasing occupations allotted to them being the ministering, daily and hourly, to the comfort of husbands and children,—works of very great importance no doubt, and very delightful too to all good minds, but quite disproportionate to their intellectual and moral capabilities, which, (no provision being made for their exercise,) are evidently slighted and contemned. To a woman her husband is her god on earth, according to the Shástras; and strict, unmurmuring obedience is the worship she is enjoined to offer him. However infirm or offensive he may be, whether a fool or a rake, a drunkard or a fiend, her inferiority changes not its character according to the variations of the case. If her husband laugh she must laugh, if her husband weep she must weep; when he speaks to her she shall answer to please him, and when he speaks not she shall keep her eyes fixed on her master, and be ready to receive his commands. In every thing she does, her only aim must be to delight him; and if he speaks to her in a passion, or even beats her unjustly, she must receive the punishment without a murmur, and entreat his forgiveness. To retort upon him for abuse or a blow, or even to feel angry, or be sullen for either, is exceedingly heinous; nor has she the privilege to complain against him. All this is very pleasant no doubt to the “Lords of creation;” but it smacks a little too much of tyranny, and attests powerfully the fact, that, altogether, the sex is held in low esteem.

Our readers, habituated to observe the more independent temper of European wives, will perhaps be naturally disposed to enquire, if all the requirements of the text are actually conceded by the women of India. Yes, indeed, they are. Every tyranny is unobtrusively submitted to, perhaps because they cannot help it. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord," is a Christian precept. But the submission of a Hindu wife is, of all others, its best illustration, except that the illustration, in the case, pushes to an extreme even beyond the impressive direction. The obedience enjoined by the Apostle is not *unlimited* obedience, that conceded by the Hindu wife is. She has not the liberty to observe where obedience ceases to be a connubial duty. Is it then an unwilling submission that the Hindu wife renders to her lord? No; habit has now made that natural which at first was, nay, must have been, constrained. Servile homage, she has been taught, is her duty, and she performs it with cheerfulness. Perhaps one of the causes of this unobtrusive obsequiousness is to be traced in the circumstances of her condition. Her husband is her only prop in the world; she is attached to him for life or death; none other of her relatives can ever make up his loss; the severest of husbands is better than none at all; the marriage state always preferable to widowhood. This greatly contributes to make the Hindu wife smile so sweetly under her burthen.

All her devotedness to her husband, however, does not soften down his oppression. The disposition to oppress is inherent in human nature, and, where society is in a degraded state, it never fails to manifest itself prominently. Besides her personal charms woman has nothing with which to counteract this spirit of tyranny, nothing where civilization and intellectual progress have not elevated her above its influence. Here the strides of progress have been tardy, and in all the ties of life, conjugal, filial and paternal, woman is always more or less oppressed. Where the fathers, husbands and sons happen to be above the general run of the community, the condition of the sex indeed fails not to be more than ordinarily happy. But this is not a frequent case, and the misery of the mass seldom receives much sympathy.

And how does woman repay this severity ? We have said she is uncomplainingly submissive to her lord, and we shall add that she is devotedly affectionate to him :—

“ Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
 She darkly feels him great and wise,
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
 ‘ I cannot understand : I love.’ ”*

Those who have witnessed the expression of a widow's grief, those who have observed the extent of her violent sorrow, must know this well. There are authors indeed, who, unable to appreciate the charac-

ter of these mournful demonstrations, have imputed them to affectation and grimace, not sorrows, forgetting that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." But there is a nationality in every thing which strangers may never appreciate. Europeans find fault with the heart-rending lamentations of the Hindu widow, as beyond what real affection would urge to; and the Hindus consider the European mourning for the dead, with all its sable pageantry, as much too insufficient a regret for the loved and the true. Here both judgments are alike in error. When we remember that the death of her husband is to the Hindu widow the commencement of a long, unending chain of afflictions, we should pause ere we accuse her of hypocrisy in her wailings and lamentations for the loss.

There was a time when the Hindu widow gave more decided, though more barbarous proofs of the strength of her attachment; when, holding all the world in low esteem, and anxious to partake with her deceased lord the enjoyments of the blessed, she suffered herself to be burnt with him alive, rather than survive him. The comfortless condition of her after-life, the vanity of winning high renown, the almost coercive solicitudes of relatives and friends, no doubt had their influence in conducing to this. But they err who conclude that Hindu women only made a virtue of necessity on all such occasions, for we have the clearest details of many cases where conjugal affection was the only motive for the mighty sacrifice. Nor is India

the only country where the practice has been in force. Herodotus and others tell us, that among some of the ancient nations, it was known in very early times; and that among many wives disputes often arose for the honor of dying with their lord. We are not to be understood as advocating the *Suttee*. Even where the immolation was not an act of murder, on the part of those who enticed or forced the bereaved wife to the sacrifice, even where it was a voluntary renunciation of existence at the shrine of love, we cannot find for it a better name than suicide; and we agree with the poet, that

“Duteous life

Makes truer martyrdom, and sight more fair,

For men and angels, than one blank hour of such despair.”

But surely, surely the burning of the living with the dead was an undeniable proof of strong, connubial attachment.

Nor are the feelings of the Hindu wife entirely absorbed in her love for her husband. Her affection for her children is proverbially inordinate; though, she being unskilled in learning, and not trained for discipline, this partiality, perhaps, is frequently productive of much evil. Not well understanding in what consists the welfare of the child, and yet anxious for its comfort, the mother often materially interferes with the discipline of its training, and fondles it when it should be chastised. Ignorance gives affection a wrong bias. But the affection, though many times injurious, is not the less true. “A wife and a

mother," said the pious Francisca Romana, "when called upon, must quit her god at the altar, and find him in her household affairs;" and woman in India practises according to that beautiful motto, every day of her life.

Her love for the family, generally, is also far from being lukewarm. Native families are for the most part, very fond of living together, and many of our readers have no idea of what fondness generally exists between all parties thus residing in company, and what privations they endure to comfort and please each other. The women, to whom everything sweet and beautiful naturally belongs, are of course, always at the bottom of this harmony. Where they are indifferent, there no harmony exists. In the chambers of sickness and pain also, in the midst of anxiety, sorrow and disappointment, the Hindu wife, sister and daughter is, what woman is in all parts of the world, a ministering angel. The laborious care and tenderness with which she attends and watches over her sick relatives, has never been surpassed; and the tears of sympathy she sheds over their sufferings are always as sincere as they are copious. Her heart is ever overflowing with the tenderest affections; and there are no personal privations, no self-devotion, which she will not uncomplainingly put up with to alleviate misery. From wealth to penury she will descend and complain not, from splendour to disgrace she will slide down with an unruffled brow. Even towards strangers the kindness of her conduct

stretches forth its influence, and that without any reference to the prejudices of caste, and often in pleasing contrast with the sullen apathy of the men.

Women in India are affectionate. We cannot say as much for the men. "Husbands, love your wives," is a text not in such general acceptance here, as is that which teaches wives to submit themselves unto their husbands. A husband is said to love his wife when he is not scandalously and notoriously addicted to incontinence. That match is pronounced to be excellent, where the husband is not unkind. (Of many, the life is so unpleasant, that we doubt if any European lady could have ever put up with it, condemned as they are to endure alternatively the fits of drunkenness, ferocity and fondness—the fondness often as embittering as cruelty and excess. Amongst great people it is not uncommon for husband and wife to live altogether asunder, though on the same premises, and on the part of the husband in perfect unconcern. If assumed coldness is common to all Hindu lovers, real coldness in these cases amounts almost to positive harshness. • And yet all this repulsion has no defence. The husband is not indifferent, because he thinks his wife has misbehaved. He knows her to be true, fond and affectionate, but the nature of his amusements will not allow him to return her love. He is indifferent to her that he may have better opportunities of gambling away his hours, or of pleasing his harlot. Perhaps the education of women might improve this state of affairs.

It would surely enable the wife to render home more agreeable, and give to her native charms some additional strength. Where she is slighted only for her simple heart, it may even serve to prop up her influence. But the corruption of habits is so great amongst the rich, that we are not sanguine in our hopes that it will make the husband more desirous of her society. The experiment, however, should be tried, for it might improve the husbands as well as their wives.

THE ROHILLA AFGHANS IN INDIA.*

A RECAPITULATION of the past can never be unprofitable. We therefore make no apology for recurring to an examination of Captain Hamilton's work, though the work itself, and the incidents contained in it, in all their details, have for a long time been familiar to the public. We do not intend to offer any critical opinions on the literary merits of the writer ; for it would be altogether out of date now either to approve or question them. We mean only to dwell on the facts he has recorded, facts which even at this distance of time have not entirely ceased to be interesting ; and briefly to set before our readers an abridgment of his narrative, interspersed with such comments as may occur to us. We shall also take the liberty of differing from him on certain

* An Historical Relation of the origin, progress and final dissolution of the Government of the Rohilla Afghans in the Northern Provinces of Hindustan, compiled from a Persian Manuscript and other original papers, by Captain Charles Hamilton.

points, and not deny ourselves the advantages to be derived from other sources of information.

The Rohilla Afghans acted a very prominent part in India, for a period of about thirty-five years. Their connection with the history of this empire commenced from the period when Humaioon reigned on the throne of Delhi. Ferid Shere, the descendant of a Rohilla adventurer, having unfurled the standard of rebellion in a country where his forefathers had migrated in search of military employment, succeeded in expelling the Mogul emperor from his dominions, and usurped the imperial authority. His historians tell us that he amply atoned for the violence of his conduct as a subject, by his justice and liberality as a king. Though his reign was of short duration, and though he was constantly and actively engaged in the field, he nevertheless managed to introduce many improvements into the civil administration of the country, and effected various works of public beneficence, the best and most impartial records of the genius and spirit which characterised his rule. During his sovereignty several bands of Afghan adventurers descended from their mountain fastnesses into the plains of India, allured by the prospects of advancement under an emperor of their race ; and, of these emigrants, the Rohillas, or highlanders, (as those who inhabited the mountainous district of Roh, in Afghanistan, were called,) comprised a full complement. Ferid Shere received the new comers with open arms ; and, as some of the nobility and gentry of

the empire had forsaken their homes and possessions apprehending ill-treatment from the usurper, and had evinced no disposition to support his power, he presented grants of all the evacuated estates and employments to his fellow countrymen. On the death of Ferid Shere, Humaioon recovered his throne, and completely put down the heirs of his opponent. But the Afghans had already formed themselves into a powerful body, too powerful to be suppressed with impunity; and the prudent emperor, by nature more inclined to ease than to ambition, wisely permitted them to retain their privileges unmolested. Thus settled on a firm footing, the Afghans soon began to look after higher distinctions; and, having nothing to lose and nothing to fear, they had much to hope for and aspire to under a government at all times disturbed by insurrections, and in a country where the bold and the daring have had, in all ages, the most ample prospects of elevation. The frequent defection of chiefs entrusted with the government of distant provinces, and the constant incursion of Mah-ratta freebooters, caused a perpetual demand for stubborn warriors, capable of supporting the imperial authority throughout the extensive limits of the empire; and the Mogul princes found, in these needy adventurers, hardy veterans willing to undergo every trouble, and able to encounter every difficulty. Nor were their services unrequited. The government of large districts was gradually transferred into their hands, and the kingly power subsequently becoming

too weak to retain its supremacy over its dependencies, they were gradually dismembered from the parent tree and became virtually independent. Of the many principalities which thus grew out of the ruins of the Mogul empire, one of the last was Rohilkund, or the country of the Rohillas.

Ali Mohumud Khan, the founder of the Rohilla independency in India, is, according to some accounts, said to have been of Hindu parentage—a peasant boy, saved from a burning village, and early adopted and educated by a Rohilla Afghan. But this statement of his origin is certainly ill-supported. Captain Hamilton makes him the second son of the adventurer, and we do not see any reason to differ from him. However the case may be, Ali Mohumud was an Afghan to all intents and purposes. While yet very young he displayed talents of a very superior order—prognostications of that nobleness and capacity which in time rendered him worthy of command, and acquired for him a character highly respected and beloved. The precocity of the child was timely noticed, and he accordingly became a great favorite with his father, who, from the quickness of his parts, already anticipated his future elevation. Daood Khan was an approved soldier, and had many times fought bravely under the royal banners. For his services he had obtained a fief in Budaon. But he was an ambitious and enterprising man, and discontented with his fortune. He had early perceived that the Mogul government was tottering on its foun-

dations, and that an independent sovereignty for his countrymen could be attempted with impunity. But his followers did not amount to more than three hundred men. The time for him to venture on it was therefore not yet come. He had also well calculated the chances of war. The life he led was a desperate one, and if possible, more uncertain than the ordinary state of human existence. The time for him to venture on it might therefore never come. But the object was not to be relinquished. He had dreamed of it day and night. With it were wound all his hopes and aspirations. It could not be abandoned. He therefore carefully instructed Ali Mohumud in the part he was to sustain, and Ali Mohumud proved an apt and promising scholar. Daood Khan did not live to see his projects accomplished, but his anticipations, to the full extent of his ambition, were realized by his son.

On the death of his father, Ali Mohumud entered into the service of the fouzdar of Moradabad, and very soon succeeded in ingratiating himself in his good opinion. His conduct procured him, at the recommendation of that officer, a renewal of the grant bestowed on his father, and also the collectorship of a considerable pergunnah, together with a *jydad* or consignment of some villages, for the support of his followers. The Rohilla took every opportunity to increase his power. His fame—for he had already won a name for valor—invited towards him multitudes of Afghan vagrants, and, as he foresaw that his conduct must

eventually draw down upon him very potent enemies, he omitted to take advantage of no opportunity that contributed to strengthen his party. His soldiers were devotedly attached to him, and he had friends at court. His designs were yet unperceived by the negligent nobles who conducted the affairs of the state, and his loyalty was unsuspected. Occasional enterprises undertaken in behalf of the emperor had also served to deepen the color of his disguise, at the same time that they had obtained for him rewards in titles, *kheluts* and new grants. The imbecile government of Mahmood Shah was well adapted to ripen his scheme; and the disorders which ensued upon the invasion of Nadir, hastened to the same end. Every country through which Nadir had passed was laid waste by fire and the sword. His route was marked with the blood of the inhabitants, and the flames of their houses; and even the hardy mountaineers of Cabul had felt the desolating ravages of that intrepid warrior. He had waged a war of extermination in the heart of their empire; and, unable to oppose the current of his triumphs, they had been obliged to yield. Many however, rather than submit to the victor, relinquished their homes, where safety was no longer to be found, and, in large bands, descended from their mountains to seek service in India. The chiefs under whom they enlisted were numerous: Ali Mohumud was one of them.

The prospects of Ali Mohumud, however, were not entirely unchequered. He had a very difficult part

to sustain, and ran many risks and many dangers. His friend and patron, the fouzdar of Moradabad, had been succeeded in office by another, Rajah Hirnund, a Hindoo, who had received special instructions from the vizier carefully to watch over his conduct. Despotism hath both large eyes and large ears. It sees what is not visible to other eyes, hears what is unheard by other ears. A morbid sensitiveness of every thing that threatens any invasion of its prerogatives is in it an instinct ; and, though the designs of the Rohilla were yet deeply veiled, they had already begun to be suspected at court. The vizier was a friend of Ali Mohumud. But he was also alive to the interests of his sovereign. Though often negligent, he was not always supine. The condition of the Rohilla had in a few years remarkably altered ; and the minister, roused from his lethargy, and suspecting that something was going wrong, determined to have, if possible, a greater insight into his affairs. Rajah Hirnund was therefore instructed to demand the quit rents due to the government, which had fallen into arrears. Of these Ali Mohumud deferred payment under various pretences. The conduct of the fouzdar irritated the Rohilla. The Rajah, proud of his dignity, was overbearing in the extreme ; and the Afghan would not put up with his presumption and insolence.* An engagement was the consequence, and Hirnund was defeated and slain. The Seir Mutáqherin gives an interesting account of this incident, and states, that, while the Afghans fell on his army, the Rajah

was closeted in his oratory occupied in his devotions, and consulting his idols if yet the favorable hour was come. In this state he suffered himself to be cut down by his enemies, who were astonished at his conduct. A stronger proof of the folly of superstition has perhaps never been advanced.

The triumph of Ali Mohumud was a paltry one ; but, in desperate times, the slightest circumstance will often make or mar one's fortune, and the fall of Rajah Hirnund considerably elevated the position of the Rohilla. At first things appeared to go much against him. The vizier, his only friend at court, affected to be extremely annoyed ; and threatened to press matters to a crisis. But the Rohilla was shrewd, as well as valiant ; and, by bestowing a daughter, with a considerable dowry, on one of the sons of the minister, he not only averted the impending danger, but also, obtained a grant of the lands of the late Rajah Hirnund, and all the advantages of increased consequence.

From this period Ali Mohumud began to be recognised as one of the princes of the land. The position, however, which he enjoyed, as the chief of a desperate band of adventurers, the object he had in view of creating an independent principality, and, above all, the spirit which influenced his conduct, were ill-calculated to keep him at peace with the court for any long period. Some of his men quarreling with certain retainers of the Subadar of Oude, who had been despatched by their master to cut timber in the forests

of Kuttaheir, a disturbance ensued, in which some lives were lost. The Subadar threatened vengeance, and the imperial ear, hitherto closed against the representations of Ali Mohumud's enemies, now eagerly listened to the complaints preferred against him. An order was sent to Ali Mohumud to deliver up such of the Rohillas as had caused the disturbance. But he respectfully, yet positively, declined to surrender them. This, which was nothing less than an open declaration of rebellion, heightened the emperor's alarm, and roused him to a consciousness of the Rohilla's object. At the head of a large army Mahmood Shah in person took the field, resolved to chastise the arrogance of the adventurer. Ali Mohumud's followers now numbered twenty thousand men, but he made no strong efforts to meet his royal opponent. The fidelity of his troops was now severely tried. Royal edicts threatening the most cruel punishments, and the underhand practices of the Subadar of Oude, weaned many of his retainers from their strong attachment to him. He had lost much credit amongst them for not attempting a desperate opposition, and they deserted him in numbers. He was besieged in the citadel where he sought refuge, and surrendered without striking a single blow. The mediation of the vizier, however, to whose care he was committed, retrieved his fallen fortunes. Kumirudeen was a generous man, and never implacable in his resentment. The frequent disorders occasioned by the Rohilla had provoked him highly, but he was

always open to sympathy. He treated his prisoner leniently and honorably; and even the followers of that refractory chieftain had no cause to complain. To continue Ali Mohumud at his post was however not to be thought of. He was therefore appointed fouzdar of Sirhind, and his retainers debarred from following his fortunes. Thus separated from their chief, the Rohillas were obliged to settle in the districts they had usurped.

In the year 1744 Ahmed Shah Dooranee first invaded India. He received a warm reception, and, after some ineffectual efforts, was obliged to retire. But he had acquired a rich booty, the richest portion of which, in his own estimation, consisted of two boys, the sons of Ali Mohumud, who, having been left by their father, as hostages for his fidelity with the emperor, fell into the hands of Ahmed Shah, and were retained by him as pledges for their father's assistance, should he on any future occasion re-attempt an invasion of India. In what light the father regarded the capture of his children we know not, but he had no time to indulge in useless regrets, if he did regret it; for, at this juncture, many changes had occurred in the internal economy of the Mogul government, and Ali Mohumud perceived, that, the tide destined to lead him on to fortune, was now "i' the flood." The old vizier Kumoruddeen had been killed on the field of glory, struck by a cannon ball while at his devotions; and the old sultan, too, had followed his faithful servant to the grave—a victim of cares and opium doses.

Ahmed Shah, the son of the late emperor, had succeeded to the royal dignity; and Sufdar Jung, the Subadar of Oude, and the most inveterate enemy of Ali Mohumud, had been appointed his vizier. This was a period of general confusion; and Ali Mohumud took advantage of it to re-enter Rohilkund, and carry out his designs. His retainers had long and anxiously awaited his return; and even those who had formerly deserted him, ashamed of their own pusillanimous conduct, now joined him with increased attachment. The imperial governor, unable to oppose his adversary, was compelled to retire before him; and, by the time the court was restored to tranquillity, the Rohilla found himself able to dictate his own terms of conciliation. The title of Rohilkund now extended over a much larger tract than he had ever owned before. The whole district of Kuttaheir acknowledged his sway. And the court of Delhi, perceiving that it was vain to assert its rights, and still anxious to preserve a nominal supremacy, confirmed him in his usurpations. Thus was established the independent principality of the Rohilla Afghans.

The means by which Ali Mohumud attained his elevation, the obstacles he surmounted, and the oppositions he overcame, bear strong testimony to his extraordinary talents. The absolute and uncontrolled authority, which the Rohilla exercised over his followers, shows clearly that he knew how to reconcile the greatest vigor in command, with the most perfect affability of manners; the cool collectedness with

which he took possession of advantages in moments of the greatest anarchy, evinces that, with the most enterprising spirit, he united the greatest self-possession; and the vigilance with which he eluded dangers, and the skill with which he extricated himself when involved in them, prove that, with the best capacities for action, he was not deficient in shrewdness and artifice.

After having succeeded in securing the possession and independence of Rohilkund, Ali Mohumud turned his attention to the nobler study of regulating his government. In this occupation he displayed talents of the highest order; and the prudence and policy of his measures have received even greater encomiums than that enterprising spirit and aspiring genius to which he owed his elevation. His conduct towards his Hindu subjects was perhaps unjustifiably severe, when he compelled them not only to vacate the posts of honor and emolument they held in the district, but also to give up the lands that belonged to them. But, considering his position, he had at least a plausible excuse for this harshness. The lands thus tyrannically wrested, and the places thus forcibly rendered vacant, he gave to his own creatures, to strengthen his independence, that he might be able at all times to defy the enmity of the imperial court, which had not yet abandoned all hopes of recovering its lost dominions. The foresight and vigilance that dictated this policy cannot therefore be blamed. His own interest, and the interest of his nation thus secured, he passed many

wise and salutary regulations for the proper administration of justice, improved the system of the police, and even took some steps for the encouragement of learning. But his days were cut short in the prosecution of these praiseworthy undertakings; and, in the year 1749, he expired in full durbar, "amidst the united murmurs of sorrow and applause," and leaving "a great and lasting reputation among his countrymen."

The death of Ali Mohumud emboldened his enemies to attempt again to overturn the Afghan supremacy in Rohilkund. Sufdar Jung, the Subadar of Oude, remembered old days, and the insults he had received from the Rohillas. He also dreaded their neighbourhood and towering ambition. He now enjoyed the powers of the vizierut; and those powers, always paramount under an imbecile monarchy, he resolved to make subservient to his private ends. The Rohillas were a nation of fresh conquerors, and could on emergency muster more than fifty thousand warriors on the field,—warriors the like of whom were hardly to be met with in India. The vizier had no force to cope with such antagonists; and a direct contact with them he therefore carefully avoided. Indirect means for accomplishing his purpose were nevertheless resorted to. A firman, under the imperial seal, was issued, appointing one Kuttubuddeen to be fouzdar of Moradabad; and he was left to fight out his way to that distinction as he best might. Kuttubuddeen, however, soon found that to enforce a royal

commission was not always quite so easy, as, under certain circumstances, to obtain it. He was completely defeated by the Rohillas, and his followers entirely cut down. But the vizier was not disheartened. Kaem Jung, an Afghan adventurer of the Bungish tribe, and now Nabob of Furruckabad, an independent principality like Rohilkund, and established under similar circumstances, was instigated by him to declare war against the Rohillas. Kaem was not a friend of the vizier; and, in adopting him as his instrument, the wily minister contemplated the acquisition of both Rohilkund and Furruckabad. He felt confident, that the Afghan tribes, contending with each other, would most effectually disable themselves; and then would be the time for him to fall on both. The Rohillas perceived his object, expostulated with their brethren of the Bungish tribe, and even offered to concede a portion of their territories to Kaem Jung, if he would keep the peace; but that ambitious and deluded chieftain, fancying himself sure of success, and attributing their solicitations to weakness and pusillanimity, persisted in his hostilities. Kaem Jung had soon occasion to repent of his obstinacy. A battle took place between him and the Rohillas, and he was defeated and slain. Sufdar Jung, who had anticipated advantages whichever party might win, now turned his eyes on the fair possessions of the deceased. He prevailed upon the emperor to march against Furruckabad; and, unable to resist him, the widow, children and mother of the

late Nabob submitted to his authority. But Ahmed Khan, a brother of the deceased, who is said to have yielded at first, and submitted to be a pensioner of the vizier, was subsequently aroused to avenge the cause of his nation, and prolong the contest. Collecting together the warriors of his tribe, he stood ready to meet the emergency. The fortune of the Afghan prevailed over every obstacle. He soon succeeded in recovering the territories of his brother; and Rajah Newal Roy, the deputy of the vizier, in the soubah of Oude, having attacked him, was defeated. Nor did the vizier in person succeed better. The determined spirit and impetuous valour of the Afghans triumphed over every difficulty, and counterbalanced every disparity of numbers and circumstances; and, in a general action, the imperial forces sustained the most signal defeat. To avenge the disgrace he had sustained, Sufdar Jung invited over the Mahrattas to his aid, and in large numbers those greedy freebooters rallied under his standard. He was thus enabled to advance once more upon Furruckabad in pomp and at the head of a large army. The Bungish chieftains became alarmed at the mighty aspect of the opposition, and hastened to form a confederacy with their Rohilla neighbours. But there was diversity in the councils of the latter. Of the six sons of Ali Mohumud two were still prisoners with the Dooranee chieftain, and the other four were yet minors. The eldest of these last, in the absence of his seniors, was the recognized head of the tribe, and had been invested with the in-

signia of authority. But the real power rested in the hands of Hafiz Rahmut Khan and Doondee Khan, relatives of Ali Mohumud, and by him appointed guardians of his children. The nominal chief hearkened to the appeal of the Bungish tribe with great deference, and embraced their cause with avidity as a national one. But his guardians evinced no similar feelings, and positively refused to give to his alliance the sanction of their authority. This unhappy difference terminated in the most disastrous results. The Rohillas divided into two parties. One joined the Bungish army; the other remained neutral. But in times of war neutrality is a sin, and a sin too flagrant to be passed over unnoticed by either party. The guilt of one faction naturally criminated the whole race in the estimation of the vizier; and Rāhmut Khan and Doondee Khan perceived too late the error they had committed. The Afghans were defeated in a pitched battle; their territories ravaged and overrun. The irresistible superiority of the enemy, compelled them to retreat even beyond the bleak hills of Kumaon. But, though thus straitened, the proud spirit of the Caucasian race still showed itself in occasional sallies, which made the boldest of the Mahratta clans hesitate and tremble.

In 1753 Ahmed Shah Doorance again penetrated into India, passed the Chenaub, and laid the country eastward of it under contribution. Sufdar Jung was necessarily obliged hastily to terminate his operations against the Rohillas; and the best and only opportunity he ever had of subverting their independence, was

thus lost for ever. Peace was established on terms which the Rohillas never meant to fulfil, and which the vizier did not expect they would ever perform. Fifty lacs of rupees were promised to be paid by them; and the bonds of this engagement were transferred by the vizier to his Mahratta allies. This afforded a plausible pretext to those freebooters for attacking Rohilkund on future occasions, but at the present crisis they moved off, and the Rohillas returned to their quarters and resumed their occupations.

The two sons of Ali Mohumud Khan, who had been taken away by the Doorances, had now returned to India with Ahmed Abdalee; and they demanded the restitution of their heritage from the chiefs in power. But neither Rahmut Khan, nor Doondce Khan, were in any humour to part with their authority; and though they at first affected to comply with their requisition, they immediately after, on very indifferent pretexts, divided the Rohilla dominions between themselves. From this period commences a series of intestine wars, which gradually wore out, in a considerable degree, the strength of the Rohilla government; and hence, when the Mahrattas re-invaded their country, in 1756, the Rohillas were not able to face them; and were obliged to call upon Nabob Sooja al Dowlah, the successor of Sudar Jung, as Subadar of Oude, for a return of some good offices which they had rendered to him a short time before, during his hostilities with his father's successor in the vizierut. This requisition was responded to with great alacrity. Sooja dreaded the

proximity of the Mahrattas as much as the Rohillas. He was also grateful for the services he had received. The brunt of the contest however, fell on Nujeeb al Dowlah, formerly an adventurer under the banners of Ali Mohumud, but now a chieftain of consequence and power. Nujeeb Khan was well supported, and the assistance of Sooja was prompt and decisive. The Mahrattas retired; and their retreat as usual was tracked in blood.

It was about this period that Ahmed Abdalee invaded India for the last time. The Mogul army retreated before him wherever he came, and the wretched Alungeer II., a miserable tool in the hands of designing noblemen, earnestly besought the protection of his opponent, and invited him to Delhi. The Doo-ranee conqueror accepted the invitation, and called upon all true followers of the Prophet to aid him; and, amongst others, the Rohillas volunteered their services. A formidable power now threatened the total annihilation of the sovereignty of the house of Timur. Nor was it long without an enemy worthy of its arms. The Moguls did not dare to meet the invader; but the Mahrattas, actuated by the hope of re-establishing Hindu supremacy throughout the land, were tempted to dispute with him its sovereignty. The engagement took place on the field of Paniput. On that plain was fought the great battle, which, according to the mythic lays of the Mahábhárat, lasted for eighteen days, and gave to the descendants of Pándu the undisputed possession of the

throne of India. Paniput gave victory to the legions of Timur and Baber; and Paniput crowned the efforts of Ahmed Shah Dooranee with success. The defeat of the Mahrattas was complete. "The road to Delhi was strewed with dead bodies more than could be numbered, and twenty-five thousand were counted on the field of action."

The triumph of Ahmed Abdalee augmented, in no small measure, the power of the Rohillas; and when that conqueror retreated into Cabul, their dominion, hitherto bounded by the Ganges on the west, extended over a considerable portion of the Doab. For seven years they enjoyed their influence in peace and tranquillity; and, although the injustice of the guardians, in withholding from the children of Ali Mohumud their birthright, gave rise to occasional jealousies and dissatisfaction, the vigorous administration of the chiefs, who, in the deranged posture of affairs, had succeeded in usurping the real power of government, preserved the blessings of repose and internal harmony so needful to keep together a race of desperate mountaineers. But this state of prosperity was not destined to last long.

In the year 1769 the Mahrattas re-invaded the Doab. There was again a difference in the Rohilla councils. Doondee Khan was for not attempting opposition, and spoke of an amicable compromise with the invaders; but Hafiz Rahmut was too good a soldier to subscribe to such a doctrine. He attempted a confederation with the Bungish tribes; but these, though

willing to unite with him, found it difficult, under present circumstances, to form a junction ; and Rahmut, thus deserted by his coadjutors, was obliged to retreat before the southern warriors, after an ineffectual effort to oppose their depredations. Every inch of ground out of the proper limits of Rohilkund, which the Rohillas had acquired during the last Dooranee invasion, was now forcibly resumed. About this time also Nujeeb al Dowlah died. He had been appointed Ameer al Omrah, or Lord of the Nobles, to the court of Delhi, by the Abdallee conqueror ; and exercised all the functions of the vizier, and engrossed all the power of the emperor in his own person. He was universally esteemed as a man of extraordinary talents and virtues, and worthy of the distinguished honor conferred on him. Some accounts make him a Rohilla by birth, others give him the broad appellation of an Afghan, while Captain Hamilton traces him to the Kummer Khail tribe. However this may be, he was deeply devoted to the Rohilla cause, and effected much in augmenting the Rohilla power. Soon after him Doondee Khan also paid his debt to nature ; and the Rohilla confederacy suffered greatly by these losses.

In the mean while the Mahrattas were triumphing over the wretched fragments of the fallen empire at Delhi. Their success had exceeded their most sanguine expectations ; and Shah Alum, enticed by false professions of being supported in his dignity, had subscribed himself a willing tool to their designs, and committed the safety of his person into their hands.

They contemned his authority, and were often overbearing and insolent in the extreme ; and, unequal to the task of chastising their arrogance, the poor and forlorn emperor was compelled to acquiesce in the ill use they made of their power. They regarded his name and his mandates only as instruments for their aggrandizement ; and grants of rich and extensive territories were extorted from him by force, or coaxed out by fraud and flattery, to afford them some pretext—the mere shadow of an excuse—for extending their dominions and indulging their appetites. Nor did they stop here. They forced him to join them in their excursions, and hurried him into the field, while they positively refused to share with him the spoils of their rapine. In the midst of a rich and plentiful camp he was the only person destitute of the common necessities of his rank—more a state prisoner than a king.

Thus supported by the imperial authority, the Mahrattas cast a longing look on the fair districts of Rohilkund ; and, as usual with them, they abruptly and unexpectedly burst upon the Afghan chiefs, in the full pride of their numbers, and flushed with the prospect of a rich booty. Zabita Khan, the son and successor of Nujeeb al Dowlah, made a spirited defence, but was unable to withstand their fury. Totally unprepared for resistance, the Rohillas were compelled to retreat ; and, abandoning the scene of pillage and destruction, they sought shelter in the neighbouring forests of Gungapoor, till they could muster sufficient strength to meet the emergency.

In the mean time the rapid progress of the Mahrattas alarmed Sooja al Dowlah, and awakened him to a sense of danger. Oude he knew was too rich a lure to be despised by such lawless and sanguinary plunderers, and their proximity boded him no good. He therefore called upon his allies the British to aid him in expelling them. In making this appeal he had likewise another object in view. He had ever looked upon Rohilkund with a wishful eye, and, even at the present hour of common peril, would not relinquish the hope of one day calling it his own. A full possession of it perhaps, at this moment, he did not dream of. But he was never without his hopes of deriving some advantage or other by an attempt to attain it. That nothing but the presence of a British army would ever induce or intimidate the Rohillas to trust him, or treat with him on any but equal terms, he was well aware; and he therefore hired the services of a British army to effect his purpose. This induced Rahmut Khan, not without unwillingness, to enter into a treaty of mutual co-operation and defence with the vizier; and he subscribed an agreement on behalf, and it is said with the authority of all the Rohilla sirdars, promising the payment of forty lacs of rupees, as consideration for Sooja al Dowlah's assistance in expelling the Mahrattas from the Rohilla country. That he did receive the authority of the sirdars has not however been satisfactorily proved. If he did not, what right he had to bind them, that is, how they could be bound by his subscription to the performance of such a treaty,

is not clear. It is certain that Sooja al Dowlah made no efforts to repulse the Mahrattas, but retired quietly to his own capital, satisfied that they could not now injure him with impunity, as he had English bayonets to defend him, and not caring how they dealt with the Rohillas. The Mahrattas soon after retreated of themselves, at the commencement of the rains, and the Rohillas returned to their possessions in peace. Hafiz Rahmut now importuned the vizier, if he expected the fulfilment of his agreement, to intercede with the emperor and the Mahrattas, and make such arrangements as would deter the latter from further encroachments upon Rohilkund. But Sooja had gained his point, and turned a deaf ear to the solicitation.

Hafiz was next involved in hostilities with one of his own sons, named Enarjit Khan. Captain Hamilton attributes this domestic calamity to the turbulent disposition of that young man; but Nabob Moostujab Khan, another son of Hafiz Rahmut, and who has written his life, exonerates his brother from this calumny, and casts all the blame on the evil advisers of his father. Enarjit died of a broken heart, the consequence of his father's displeasure; and this powerfully confirms his brother's testimony.

The domestic disturbance above alluded to, was followed by another irruption of Mahratta free-booters. This time their career was attempted to be checked by the Rohillas, in the first instance, by properly guarding the fords of the Ganges; but, some how or

other, Tukojee Holkar managed to elude their vigilance and cross over with all his forces. There was now no power in Rohilkund able to oppose his career of plunder and spoliation with any effectual resistance. Zabita Khan, who had sustained the brunt of their last incursion, had since been compelled to submit to their influence. They had taken his wives, children and relatives prisoners—pledges too dear to be risked with impunity; and, to recover them out of their lawless hands, he had deserted the cause of Rohilkund, and gone over to the enemy. Rahmut, and in fact all the other sirdars, now thought of following the same conduct, for Zabita had been received with every demonstration of favor and regard. The prospect around them was gloomy, and they perceived that they could not remain any longer both independent and neutral. Their inability to contend unaided with the Mahrattas left them only two alternatives, and, bad as an alliance with that people evidently was, it appeared to them better, far better, than a confederacy with Sooja al Dowlah. Sooja was alarmed at this aspect of their deliberations, and held out every inducement to prevent their union with the enemy. According to Hafiz Rahmut he promised to remit his demand for the forty lacs of rupees they had promised him, and to restore the bond. After much hesitation and uncertainty the Rohillas at last agreed to join him, actuated, it seems, more powerfully by religious feelings, than any other consideration. Many of the sirdars had conscientious

scruples to join with infidels against the followers of the crescent, and, rather than deviate from what appeared to them to be the path of duty, they consented to brave the consequences of an union with the Nabob. The junction was accordingly effected. The combined forces for a long time watched the proceedings of the Mahrattas with great alertness, and in a general action succeeded in defeating them ; but no operations of importance took place, and soon after troubles at Poonah called off the invaders to their own country.

The retreat of the Mahrattas seemed to restore peace to Rohilkund. Except that enemy, so formidable in numbers, the Rohillas, when united by common peril, could afford to despise all other native powers in India, and never thought of danger either from the imbecile monarch who ruled on the throne of Delhi, or from the equally impotent prince who owned the soubah of Oude. But this very consciousness of their superiority went a great way in effecting their decline. The authority of the guardian was now set at nought, and petty jealousies and private feuds began to disturb the harmony of the states. But, notwithstanding all such troubles and confusion, it has yet been authoritatively advanced, that, "Rohilkund when our army entered it, in 1774, was a garden ; in a few years afterwards it was rendered a desert." This perhaps is too rhetorical to be true. It has however been admitted on all hands, that, from the very commencement of its independence, to the

day on which its liberties were violated and trampled upon, Rohilkund was the best governed territory in India. The useful and the necessary arts of life had been nurtured amongst its inhabitants with a careful hand, and the accomplishments of civilized life were not unknown. "Many persons," says Mr. Macaulay, "now living, have heard aged men talk with regret of the golden days when the Afghan princes ruled in the vale of Rohilkund."

So many versions of the Rohilla campaign have already appeared, that we are very averse to add another to the number. But a brief outline is necessary to complete the sketch we have undertaken. Sooja al Dowlah, we have already said, had set his heart on the conquest of Rohilkund; and the non-fulfilment of Hafiz Rahmut's agreement afforded him a plausible pretext to indulge his ambition. But he had not the courage to come into collision with a power that had invariably sustained its reputation for valor. He therefore applied to the British Government for assistance, promising forty lacs of rupees, as a reward for its services, and, also, the sum of two lacs and ten thousand rupees per month, to defray the expences of the army. The offer was a tempting one, and the conscience of Governor Hastings was not over scrupulous. It was accepted. Posterity will scarcely credit the truth of such a nefarious transaction. "The sun that saw the beginning and completion of this infamous bargain had risen in avarice, its meridian was in cruelty, and its setting in

blood." Mr. Hastings had his plea of imperious necessity indeed to urge, but it was such a plea as a common highwayman alone would think of putting in, in vindication of the robberies and murders he had perpetrated. The Company's treasury was exhausted, and the Governor General wanted money, for the Directors were pressing him for remittances. The dividend of the Hon'ble Proprietors must be paid, and paid un-reduced, that the Governor General might continue in the estimation he enjoyed as a man of ability.

We should here mention that Sooja al Dowlah had also attempted to negotiate with the emperor of Delhi for assistance, and had spared neither threats nor bribes to gain him over to his cause. He had promised to pay down two lacs of rupees for the expense of the outfit, and ten thousand rupees every marching day, and five thousand every halting day; and had also agreed to resign half of the conquered territory to the royal disposal. But the emperor, though he at first assented, upon reconsideration declined the offer. The descendant of Timur had more conscience than a Christian Governor. That the Mogul army nevertheless continued seemingly disposed to afford assistance, and even subsequently penetrated Rohilkund from the side of Delhi, under the command of Nujeeb Khan, appears only to have been an oriental clap-net for justifying a specious demand.

The promised assistance of the British was to Sooja al Dowlah a source of great gratification. He was now sure of Rohilkund. The Rohillas urged in vain

the generosity of their conduct in refusing to join the Mahrattas against him, they pleaded in vain for the restoration of their bond which had been promised to them. The Nabob denied having made any promise, and insisted on their extermination. What service or co-operation he had received from them had made no impression on his mind, or the remembrance of injuries received had effaced all friendlier feelings; and he determined to take every advantage of the present state of affairs.

In January, 1774, the British army entered Rohilkund. Appalled at the approach of such a powerful enemy the Rohillas attempted an amicable adjustment of differences on any terms, and offered a large bribe; but Sooja was inexorable, and raised his demand from forty lacs to two crores of rupees. The Afghan chiefs could not pay such a large amount, and, as nothing short of it would satisfy the vizier, they with a resolution worthy of their cause, prepared to die in defence of their lives, liberties and dominions. The battle of Cutterah, or Bagga Nullah, was fought on the 23rd of April, 1774. Forty thousand men were mustered on the field under the command of Hafiz Rahmut, and fought with obstinate bravery. So desperate was the assault of the Rohillas, so strong their military ardour, that, it is said, the British troops at first hesitated to face them, and were cut down in numbers; and, "it was not till the most distinguished chiefs had fallen fighting bravely at the head of their troops, that the Rohilla ranks gave way."

Throughout the action Hafiz Rahmut was present wherever the danger was greatest, cheering up his men to the charge with the courage of a soldier, and the dignity of a king ; and, when he saw that the day was against him, and that his men could no longer withstand the tremendous cannonade of the enemy, rather than yield himself up into the hands of that enemy, or turn his back upon the field, the gray-headed veteran with a shout rushed upon the English bayonets. He was killed, and his head was presented before the Nabob, whose feelings on the occasion were expressed in paroxysms of joy. One of his generals attempting to wipe off some dirt that smeared the countenance of the deceased, was checked and reprimanded. " Let it remain as it is," interrupted the Nabob, " the dirt and mire on that face are so much ornament to mine !" When this trophy was brought into the tent of Col. Champion, the English commander, some doubts were expressed as to its identity ; but these were instantly removed by the wailings of a wounded Rohilla, who was lying near, whom the sight of it had pierced with greater anguish, than all the fearful gashes on his own person. Had Sooja al Dowlah been capable of moralizing, this should have suggested to him the reflection how few of his retainers would have thus mourned for him, if the fortune of war had bereaved him of life. And yet Hafiz Rahmut was but an usurper. He had trampled on the rights of the legitimate heirs of his master, and often waged war with his brother chiefs. But he had done his

duty to the state. In all his wars, and all his feuds, he seems never to have forgotten the rights of the people, and the internal policy of his administration was ever mild and judicious. Captain Hamilton says that he was universally dreaded and disliked; but if we are to place any confidence on the testimony of Moostujab Khan, his biographer, we cannot come to the same conclusion. Bishop Heber also learnt that he was generally regarded as an excellent sovereign.

At the termination of the battle the whole country was abandoned to be pillaged. Sooja al Dowlah, which being interpreted, means the *Valorous of the Empire*, is stated to have manifested the most dastardly pusillanimity, and to have remained with his army at a respectful distance, several miles in the rear, during the brisk charges of the enemy. But, when the dangerous affair was over, he hastened with alacrity to complete their destruction, and began to butcher them with all the ferocity of a barbarian, and a coward. "Their villages were burned, their children butchered, and their women violated;" and all this was perpetrated with the tacit sanction of a British Government, and in the presence of a British Army. Col. Champion says, that the scene was beyond description, and that he could not help compassionating such unparalleled misery. He frequently requested the vizier to show lenity towards a fallen people, but he pleaded in vain. We are not bound to take the testimony of Col. Champion without making great allowances. Both Champion, and the officers serv-

ing with him, were prejudiced against the Nabob, for having been deprived by him of their portion of the Rohilla plunder. But it is very clear that their representations, though considerably over colored, were founded on unquestionable facts.

The wrongs of Rohilkund, however, were subsequently avenged. The author of all her miseries, it is said, terminated his life under the stroke of an Afghan knife. His death forms no part of our narrative, but as it, in some measure, serves to elucidate the Rohilla character, we advert to it without apology. During the sack and destruction of Rohilkund, Sooja al Dowlah seems to have been particularly employed in the cowardly act of ransacking the zenanas of the murdered chieftains, and selecting therefrom concubines for his own. Among the many who had the unhappiness to please him, was a daughter of Hafiz Rahmut Khan, a very handsome and honorable maiden. She parted with her mother in deep distress, and the lessons she received from her, on the occasion, were such as we seldom meet with in the pages of Indian history. She was instructed to remember that she was the daughter of a king, the betrothed bride of a prince, and no man's concubine; and that Sooja al Dowlah was a villain, who had murdered her father, entailed slavery and prostitution on her family, and reduced her nation to misery. With these lessons she received a gift from her parent—it was the last token of her affection—a poisoned clasp knife! Never Spartan mother gave a more suitable present, nor Spartan

offspring receive it with greater devotion. Sooja al Dowlah's lust was most severely visited. The girl shuddered at the idea of defilement, and, when he endeavoured to force her innocence, she drew out the weapon from her hair, within which she had kept it concealed, and stabbed him. The wound degenerated into a cancer, and finally proved mortal. Thus were the Rohillas avenged.

Of the sirdars, who escaped the dreadful carnage to which Rohilkund was exposed, the greatest was Fyzoola Khan, the second and only remaining son of Ali Mohumud, hitherto a chief of minor consequence, but now the undoubted head of the Rohilla name. With the remnants of his army he fled towards the northern hills, and strongly entrenched himself in the jungles, where he was daily joined by numbers of his fellow fugitives. In the mean while, the fit of vengeance being over, perhaps satiated by the extraordinary and extravagant indulgence it had received, Sooja al Dowlah affected to be generous and humane, and is said to have shown some kindness, or rather a degree of forbearance, to those who threw themselves on his protection. But these cases after all could not have been many, for the Rohillas still joined Fyzoola Khan in numbers ; so much so, that the vizier began to be alarmed, and manifested considerable anxiety to push matters to an end. At his repeated solicitations and entreaties the English army again took the field, and marched toward the hills, where the Rohilla chief had taken up his quarters. The march

was effected without opposition, and the Rohillas were cooped up in their entrenchments. But they still threatened an obstinate resistance, and evinced no disposition to yield. The Nabob now began to be anxious for an accommodation. The Mahrattas had settled their domestic disturbances, and were ready to burst again on the theatre of their depredations. Sooja al Dowlah was therefore uneasy lest the Rohillas should retire into the country between the mountains, and gain time, till the invasion of those freebooters should divert his attention, and call him off to the defence of his own country. Under such circumstances, he apprehended formidable enemies in front and rear, if not a complete explosion of all his ambitious schemes. The allied army also, had become discontented, "on account of hardship, arrears of pay, and ill usage;" and were not over anxious to attack a bold enemy enjoying a formidable position, and well defended. Amicable arrangements were therefore concluded by treaty. Fyzoola Khan obtained in jaghire the pergunnahs of Shawbad and Rampore, yielding him, in aggregate, the sum of fifteen lacs of rupees per annum; and, in consideration thereof, surrendered one-half of all his effects to the vizier, and bound himself down to live in submission and obedience to his will. Thus terminated the Rohilla campaign; thus was the independence of Rohilkund for ever put to an end.

Rohilkund now changed masters, and became subject to the iron rule of the Subadar of Oude. The deleterious politics of the Oude government soon

effected a grievous change, and, from being the Chou-rasse Mal of India, it rapidly degenerated into a waste. "The face of the country," says the Rev. Mr. Tennant, in his work entitled "Indian Recreations," "offers but too strong evidence of the fact of depopulation. Extensive wastes everywhere meet your eye which were lately in cultivation, but which are now covered with long grass. The clods left by the plough are not yet melted down so as to assimilate with the surface, nor is the grass of that extraordinary coarse and ready species which arises upon fields in their primeval wildness, or that have long been out of tilth."

The Rohilla princes also suffered as much as their dominions. Some were left entirely unnoticed, without any provision being made for their subsistence; others, suspected of possessing concealed treasure, were thrown into prison; while a few were suffered to linger on a small pension totally inadequate to their rank. Fyzoola Khan was the only gainer in this tragedy. Under the government of Hafiz Rahmut he possessed but a small district of eight lacs per annum, but the change now effected nearly doubled his income. It should not however be forgotten that the whole of the Rohilla dominions belonged to him by birth-right.

Nor did the bulk of the people thrive better than the chiefs. A stroke of the pen confiscated all their possessions and effects; and immense multitudes, among whom were many women and children, being thus deprived of their means of subsistence, turned

●

beggars or robbers, according to their sex or age, to lengthen out a wretched existence ; or perished in want and misery.

It is now time to take a retrospective view of the Rohilla government and character. The history of the Rohillas, we have seen, is but the history of a long and bloody struggle for independence. But their name is not unconnected with good government and prosperity. We must not indeed go so far as to maintain, that the unlimited adulation which they have received has been entirely merited. Their sufferings excited so much of the sympathy of mankind, and the origin and progress of their power were marked by incidents so peculiarly striking, that every thing good and every thing noble have been unhesitatingly assigned to them. To us, however, it does not appear that they were either so immaculate, or so liberal as they have been represented by parliamentary orators. They were undoubtedly brave and warlike, certainly far braver and more formidable than any of the indigenous races in India. But they were also turbulent and quarrelsome, always at war, and when they had nothing to engage them abroad, they found enough to employ them at home. Each individual mind was actuated by an ambition and a spirit of outrageous independence totally at variance with the well-being and unity of an empire ; and hence, the ingredients that composed the independent principality, very soon cleaved into numerous sub-divisions, every leader exercising over his own paltry possessions a paramount

authority. The insincerity of the race has also been proverbial, and it was a common saying amongst their enemies, that, while they prayed with one hand, they robbed with the other. Even unbiassed judges have declared it as their opinion, that they were at best a nation most notorious for its faithlessness. In spite of these defects, however, historians have agreed on the point, that the government of Rohilkund was based on liberal principles of justice and equity. For a long series of years that little tract of land presented a rare picture of prosperity and happiness. Rudely buffeted and exposed to the most violent aggressions, it was ever pertinaciously flourishing and provokingly well-regulated. Captain Hamilton seems to protest against this representation, but the evidence against him considerably preponderates.

That the Afghan emigrants were not very indulgent towards the Hindu inhabitants of Kuttaheir, we believe with our author. The followers of the Prophet have never evinced a fellow feeling with the worshippers of stocks and stones and creeping things; and it would have been too flagrantly in opposition to the spirit of Islamism, if the Rohillas had behaved otherwise than with severity, towards such unbelievers. Toleration in religion is not a Mahomedan virtue; and we are not inclined to believe that chiefs and princes, zealously attached to a religion, which enjoins death to those of a different creed, stood in any other relation but as persecutors with those of their subjects whom they regarded as infidels. The Hindu

religion and ritual were not tolerated by the Rohilla government; and this hypothesis is fully borne out by the fact of there being very few Hindu temples of any size or magnificence in Rohilkund, while the best and most splendid buildings, throughout the country, are the mosques for the faithful to pray in. All this however, cannot justify the extermination of the Rohillas; and, even if it did, it does not appear that any consideration for the welfare of the Hindu population actuated the conduct of the Nabob Vizier, or his allies. The Hindu population had no cause to congratulate themselves on their emancipation from Rohilla tyranny, as they suffered infinitely more oppression under the government of their liberator.

We have now traced the independence of Rohilkund to its termination. Fyzoola Khan for a short term enjoyed peaceful possession of his jaghire; but the jealousy of Asoph, the successor of Sooja al Dowlah, soon perceived grounds of apprehension, and would not allow him to remain at ease. The Nabob was quite as rapacious and unprincipled as his father, and he could never see a flourishing state without wishing to plunder it. The jaghire of Fyzoola Khan, being better governed, was in a much better condition than the best part of his own dominions; and this he could not endure. He was also impatient to complete the arrangements of his father, and to expel the last of the Rohillas from his neighbourhood. But nothing could be done without British

interference, and in Governor Hastings he found a man anxious to oblige him. By the treaty, which subsisted between the Rohilla and his feudal lord, the former was permitted to retain five thousand troops in his service, and was bound to assist the latter in time of war, with two or three thousand men, according to his ability. At the breaking out of the French war, the British government demanded from the chief the service of *five* thousand horse, as the quota stipulated to be furnished to the vizier. Fyzoola Khan expressed the greatest willingness to assist the British, on all occasions, but he also submitted his inability to comply with the present demand. He offered obedience to the full extent of his bond, but he was not prepared to make greater sacrifices, having been rigidly restricted from retaining more than five thousand men in his service. But his inability was disbelieved, and the excuse attributed to an unfriendly disposition. Nor did the British government condescend to give his motives a more liberal interpretation, before it extorted from his limited income a pecuniary commutation of fifteen lacs of rupees. The apparent affluence of the Rohilla, the prosperous condition of his subjects, and the superior fertility of his dominions, as contrasted with the condition of the circumjacent country, had raised up an extravagant idea of his riches, and many means were adopted to obtain from him another equivalent sum. But his utter inability to pay more saved him from further importunity and danger.

By the same treaty that had secured to Fyzoola Khan the possession of the district of Rampore and its dependencies, the great bulk of the Rohilla nation had been expatriated from their country ; and these were compelled to spread themselves all over India in their original character of desperate adventurers. In this capacity they obtained employment under different commanders, and were found serviceable in every deed of desperation. Up to this day the descendents of that iron race are reckoned throughout the land, as the best and most devoted of soldiers. Great numbers of them served under the Mahratta leaders, and when the Mahratta empire ceased to exist, they turned freebooters. Even in this state of lawlessness, they are said to have sustained, for a time, the dignity of the sterner and ruder virtues, plundering only the rich and the great, and extending over the humbler classes of society the shadow of their protection. But this trait of character, under their circumstances, could not be preserved long. Necessity has no law ; and, reduced to the greatest distress, they were soon compelled to embrace every chance that promised, or appeared to promise them subsistence, and crimes of every species began gradually to be allied with the Rohilla name.

We need not here advert to the causes which have since transferred Rohilkund into British hands. It is sufficient simply to mention, that the circumstance has certainly been conducive of the greatest benefits. The horrible manner in which the Nabob of Oude had

oppressed and misgoverned it, had rendered the fostering influence of a more liberal government necessary to restore it to its former prosperity ; and, as fifty years have now passed over since the time that it was ceded to the Company, we may observe without hesitation, that it has now completely recovered. The hatred of the Rohillas, nevertheless, is deep-rooted against the British name. Of that generation which received injury at British hands, perhaps, not one now survives ; but, not all the amends that were made to them, not all the kindness that has ever since been shown towards their descendants, have yet effaced from the remembrance of the latter, the injuries which their forefathers had suffered.

HINDU CASTE; ITS NATURE, ORIGIN AND TENDENCY.

THE permanent division of the community into classes, with hereditary professions assigned to each, is certainly, as has been correctly observed by Mr. Colebrooke, one of the most remarkable institutions of Hindustán. In the earlier ages of society the system seems to have prevailed extensively throughout the world. Amongst the Egyptians—in the Assyrian empire—in Greece, in the days of Cecrops and Theseus—in Crete, while the laws of Minos continued in authority—in Iberia—in Persia—even among the Anglo-Saxons and the ancient inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, it existed, accommodating itself in some slight respects to the most notable peculiarities of each respective people, but always preserving a degree of uniformity sufficient to certify its sameness. In some countries the military class, in others that of the priests, held the most prominent post of honor, just as superstition or warlike enthusiasm predominated in the character of the inhabitants; and there were some little dissimilarities also with respect to the de-

tails of the duties allotted to the different orders, and the restrictions with which they were respectively guarded in different lands. But the scope, nature and tendency of the institution appear everywhere to have been the same. In the course of events, however, all other countries have, one after another, disclaimed the system, and rent its disgusting fetters asunder; and its only stronghold at the present moment is this unhappy country, where hitherto age, far from enfeebling its powers, seems only to have contributed to strengthen its foundations.

The origin of caste in India seems immemorial, the Hindu Shástras declaring that it commenced with the creation of the world; and the nature of it is set down by the same texts which allude to its origin. A recognition of the four primary divisions of the institution, has been traced even to the Veds, the most primitive writings of the Hindus. But these only give the simplest outlines. The Bráhmans are spoken of in them indeed as the highest in the rank of precedence; but the Sudras, though alluded to as a serving class, and the lowest of the four, are not regarded quite in the light of helots and slaves. According to the Veds, Bruhma, when he created men, first created the Bráhmans alone. But this was not quite satisfactory to him. He did not enjoy a state of things in which there were no diversity of occupations and character. He therefore created the Kshetriyas, for the protection of the world. Feelings of dissatisfaction still disturbed his mind. He had not created

variety enough to satisfy his own procreating passion. The Vaisyas were therefore added to the number of his creations, and the duty of "acquiring wealth" was assigned to them. But there was yet a gap to fill up. There were no servants in existence. To make up this want he created the Sudras. This is the version of the Vrihad Aranyaca Upanishad. It does not give us however, a full development of the system. In the age of the Veds and their Upanishads the system of caste had not evidently attained its matured perfection. For a right understanding of the nature of the institution therefore, we must refer to the Shástras of a later era and a lower grade; and the Mánava Dharma gives us all the necessary information on the subject.

"That the human race might be multiplied," says the 31st verse of the first chapter, of the Institutes of Menu, "the Supreme Ruler caused the Bráhman, the Kshetriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra—so named from the scripture, protection, wealth and labour—to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh, and his foot." And to these he allotted separate duties, according to the 88th, 89th, 90th and 91st verses of the same chapter, assigning the study of religion and the cultivation of letters and the sciences, which are made a part of religion, to the first; government and the defence of the state, to the second; commerce and agriculture, to the third; and servitude to the last. The employments chalked out to each division were thus made to bear the stamp of divine authority, the station of every

individual was unalterably fixed, and insurmountable barriers were set up by subsequent provisions, to withhold the different tribes from social intercourse with each other. The 13th verse of the 3rd chapter, gave indeed the higher classes the privilege of marrying women of the lower orders, but this was evidently permitted only with a view to legitimatise the issue, without authorising any intermixture. Even this license was probably enjoyed for a short while only. In the present age such marriages are considered illegal, and every individual is bound to marry in his tribe.

The degree of elevation, which one tribe usurped over the others, was also defined by the laws. The 93rd verse of the first chapter, of the code we have quoted, declares the Bráhmaṇ to be the chief of the whole creation. "The very birth of Bráhmaṇs," says the 98th verse, "is a constant incarnation of Dharma;" and the 100th verse declares that all things existing in the universe belong to them. The most remarkable advantages are awarded to them over the other classes of the community. Their lives and persons are protected by the severest regulations in this world, and the most tremendous denunciations for the next. They are secured even from most of the punishments of the law. For no offence are they to forfeit their lives or properties, and even their liberties are not to be encroached upon, for "a Bráhmaṇ can never be a slave." He pays a small fine where the Kshetriya pays a heavy one; he is mulcted for what the Sudra forfeits his life. "A man of the servile

class," says Menu, "who commits adultery with the wife of a priest, ought to suffer death." But a Bráhma-
man, who carnally knows the wife of another, even
if it be without her free will, escapes on payment of a
fine. If he commits robbery worthy of death, but
has been accustomed to offer a burnt-sacrifice daily,
it is a sufficient punishment to shave his head ! and
so on. The king is not to provoke the anger of a
Bráhma-
man, for the meanest of the order is much superior
to the greatest sovereign ; the magistrates are not
to imagine evil in their hearts against him ; and the
public at large have but one duty, which is to minis-
ter to the pampered appetites of their sacred superiors.
Towards the subordinate classes, the Bráhmans are
enjoined to keep the same distance as the gods are
supposed to keep to them ; and for the slightest dis-
respect or insubordination the Sudra is amenable to
the severest vengeance, for "irreverence to a Bráh-
man is irreverence to the gods." Discussion with a
Bráhma-
man is prohibited by law, and overpowering him
in argument is declared to be a crime. In every res-
pect he is peculiarly privileged. A priest alone, ac-
cording to the Shástras, can represent his sovereign
on the bench, and exercise his juridical authority ;
he alone can interpret the laws ; he alone is declared
worthy of expounding the sacred books, which the
highest of the other classes is barely tolerated to read ;
and for divine mercy and favor, the rest of mankind
are enjoined to propitiate his intercession. Through
him only are offerings to be rendered unto Heaven,

and unless so rendered, they shall not be acceptable. Religion, with all its rites and ceremonies, and the concerns of life, from the minutest accidents to the most important casualties, he is ordained to preside over. Birth, marriage, sickness, death, the soul's eventual deliverance from purgatory, are all subjects on which he must be consulted. Cato is recorded to have expressed his surprise that one augur could meet another without exchanging a wicked smile. How much more would he have been astonished at the brass with which the hierarchy of this country practice in concert the grossest impositions on the easy credulity of an ignorant public. Stories the most absurd remain on record, to show how far they have ventured on such impositions. In one page we read of a Bráhmaṇ having abused two of the gods of the triad, and struck the third with his foot ; in another, a second arrests the course of the sun to complete his devotions ; and again, in another, a third consumes a whole race of enemies by flames exhaled from his mouth. On such idle tales they have built their power, and so exalted it, that in no part of the world, however barbarous, does one class of men appear ever to have exercised a more baneful superiority over another, than they have all along exercised on the bulk of their countrymen. Some idea may be formed by foreigners of priestly influence, as still existing in Hindu society, from the scenes yet observable daily in the streets, of orthodox believers of all classes cagerly prostrating themselves before the

Bráhmans, as they pass, for their benedictions, receiving their feet on their heads, or scraping the dust therefrom with earnest devotion. A more repulsive feature of slavery is perhaps nowhere to be found; and the strict exaction of such respect by the priests to this day, after ages of humiliation, furnishes perhaps the strongest proof of the rubric of the Shástras having been most unrelentingly acted upon in former times.

Thus elevated above the rest of their species by the words of the scriptures, the Bráhmans engross the devotion of the other tribes, in the same proportion as they are said to engross the regard and favour of the deity. They occupy the place of God, and receive all the homage, all the fear, all the services, and all the honors which He is entitled to; and to this devotion the most ignorant has a right, as well as the most learned amongst them; for, saith the text, "he (a Bráhman) is a powerful divinity, even as fire is a powerful divinity, whether consecrated or popular." The laws condemn in strong terms ignorance or crime in them; but for no crime and no ignorance are they to forfeit the respect of the lower classes. They are, according to the Shástras, something transcendently divine, and even though they employ themselves in all sorts of mean occupations, must invariably be honored.

At first sight it would seem as if the Bráhmans, satisfied with their spiritual elevation, entertained no longings for the vanities of the world. The code of Manu prescribes to them a life of study, retirement

and austerity, such as leave no leisure for the pursuit of ambition. Even for daily food and raiment they seem to be left dependent on the attachment and veneration of the lower classes. This, perhaps, led St. Ambrose, in open terms, to prefer their manners to those of the Christians of his time. But here he was certainly mistaken. The Bráhmans, as a class, do not seem ever to have shown any very great disregard for wealth and worldly advantages; and the same code, which enjoins on them a life of severity, also makes "liberality to Bráhmans" incumbent on every virtuous man, and an especial duty of kings. From time immemorial they appear to have received from princes large donations of rent-free lands, as well as rich gifts in gold, cows and grain. All the ceremonies of religion, too, involve feasts and presents to the sacred order; and fines in commutation of penances leave to them an inexhaustible resource. They are, further, declared exempt from taxation and similar contributions, and entitled to a moiety in all treasure-troves forfeited to the government. We should not be right in supposing that the income realized from so many sources was inconsiderable. Our impression is that it could not have been less than what was acquired by the Sudra by the sweat of his brow. Ward goes further, for he makes it greater than the revenues of the monarch. But this is a glaring exaggeration.

Next in importance to the Bráhmans are the Kshetriyas, ordained to protect the earth, the cattle, and

the clergy. Though looked down upon by the Bráhmans, they are looked up to by the other classes. Even over the Bráhmans they take their places on certain occasions. At the Rájsooya sacrifice, for instance, they have the most prominent post assigned them, and are served by the Bráhmans. They are permitted by the Shástras to read the Veds, and to perform their religious ceremonies without the intervention of priests. "But," says Krishna, addressing Arjun in the Bhágavat Gítá, "a Kshetriya has no duty superior to fighting. * * * If thou art slain, thou wilt obtain Heaven ; and if thou art victorious, thou wilt enjoy a world." The command of armies, and all situations of authority belong to this order. Of this body were the ancient kings of Hindustán, both of the families of the sun and the moon ; but now it is said to have merged into the lowest class, though many in Upper Hindustán still claim the distinction of belonging to it, and a few in Bengal also, mostly of little note or name.

The Vaisyas, occupying the third place in society, are, if possible, still less numerous. Most authorities allow them the privileges enjoyed by the warrior-caste, of reading the scriptures, and of worshipping their guardian deities without the assistance of the Bráhmans. But others, again, deny that they are in any important respect superior to the Sudras, maintaining that servitude is the birth-right of both classes alike.

No benevolent person can read the rules regarding the Sudras without indignation and abhorrence. The

text assigns to the once-born servitude to the higher classes, and especially to the first of them, as his only duty on earth ; and thus places him in the most humiliating position in life. The Bráhmaṇ, Kshetriya and Vaisya, whatever may be their relative position towards each other, enjoy certain honors and privileges in common, from which the Sudra alone is excluded. These are the sacred title of the "twice-born," the investiture with the holy thread, which is a mark of regeneration, and the privilege of reading the Veds. The Sudra has no pretensions to any of them—in fact no rights save what his superiors choose to concede to him—no honors but what emanate from their compassion.* Liberty he must not aspire to, for "whether bought or unbought," says the 413th verse of the 8th chapter of Menu, "a Bráhmaṇ may compel him to perform menial duty, because he was created by the Self-Existent for the purpose of serving Bráhmans." The law excludes him also from the benefits of property, the 129th verse of the 10th chapter declaring that "no collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he has power ; since a servile man who has amassed riches, gives pain to Bráhmans;" and the 417th verse of the 8th chapter gives authority to a Bráhmaṇ to seize without hesitation the goods of his Sudra slave, and appropriate them to his own use. Interest from a Bráhmaṇ is legal at ten per cent.; from a Kshetriya at fifteen, twenty from a Vaisya, and from a Sudra fifty !

The criminal laws also, are far severer against the Sudras, than against the other orders. Injuries done to the higher classes are directed to be visited with the most rigid punishments ; but wrongs done to the Sudras, by their privileged superiors, lose, as if by touch of magic, a great part of their heinousness in the eye of the law, and are provided for with leniency. The bloodiest principles of the code of Draco are attempted to be equalled, if not surpassed, in visiting the offences of the first ; while the reprehensible mildness with which the iniquities of the latter are met, remains perhaps unparalleled in the legislation of both ancient and modern times. Nay, the tyranny over the Sudras extends further, even to religion and the prospects of future bliss. Halhed, in his code of Gentoo Laws, enumerates the punishments that await the Sudra, if he reads, hears, or gets by heart any part of the scriptures. The orifices of his ears should be stopped with molten wax if he hears; heated oil poured down his throat, if he reads ; and the punishment of death executed on him, if he learns by rote the Veds. Nor does this severity stop here. The 80th and 81st verses, of the 4th chapter of Menu, declare, " Let not a Bráhmaṇ give advice to a Sudra, nor what remains from his platter, nor clarified butter of which part has been offered to the gods, nor spiritual counsel, nor instructions for the expiation of his sins. He who declares the law to a servile man, or instructs him in the mode of expiating sin, surely sinks with that very man to the hell named

Asamverta." Thus is the Sudra not only disallowed to read the scriptures, but is also peremptorily precluded from obtaining instruction from those who alone are assumed to be competent to impart it. The higher orders of Bráhmans despise those who become priests to the Sudras. A joiner's or a washerman's Bráhman can neither eat with his prouder brethren, nor even approach them except as an inferior. His Bráhmanhood is considered polluted by the meanness of his vocation, the Sudra, for whose spiritual well-being he concerns himself, being so low in the eye of the Shástras, that his touch, like the touch of a dog, or a *Mlechha*, is sufficient to render a twice-born man unclean. So far is this prejudice against the Sudra drawn out, that the religious penance for killing him is declared to be the same, as that for killing a cat, a dog, a frog, a lizard, and so on.

Such is the classification of the community, according to the Hindu Shástras ; thus are the separate classes distinctly defined ; and thus their separate duties assigned them. But the rigid laws, which assign several duties and employments to the several orders, are, in seasons of distress, entitled to a further latitude of meaning. Then each of the classes may subsist by the occupations allotted to those beneath it, ranging at liberty from one profession to another, so long as it does not encroach on the employments of those above. But the purest virtue and the most conspicuous merit may not elevate a single individual above the grade assigned to him. The

Brāhman, unable to subsist by his sacerdotal duties, is permitted to lay aside his beads, and gird on the sword; and, should he fail to thrive in war, he may yet resort to merchandise and agriculture, to repair his shattered fortune. The Kshetriya, in like circumstances, may descend to the duties of a Vaisya, and the Vaisya to the servile acts of a Sudra. But for the Sudra there is no choice, except that he can follow the unclean trades and mechanical employments, in common with the impurer castes. In this arrangement, as usual, the advantages are all on the stronger side. The higher orders can overload the lower ones with additional labourers in seasons of distress, while exempt from their encroachment in return; and the unfortunate Sudra may thus be driven out, at any time, from the field of his labours, by his privileged superiors.

But there was a race in the eye of the law still lower than the unfortunate Sudra—beneath the lowest depth a lower still. In spite of all restrictions irregularities had crept in within the social circle, and children were born who belonged to no caste,—the unwelcome progeny of unholy alliances. In the age of Bhrigu, by whom the sacred institutes are said to have been compiled, this confusion of classes had most woefully increased. The Varnasankars, or the casteless, were become a numerous body, and the legislator found it necessary to regulate their employments. Thirty-six branches are generally mentioned in the sacred books, but there are texts which give a different num-

ber.* The highest is that sprung from a Kshetriya girl by a Bráhmaṇ father, and known by the name of Murdhabhishikta. The second is the Vaidya, born of a Vaisya woman by a man of the sacerdotal order.

* According to the Játimálú, or the Garland of Classes, an extract from the Rudramálú Tantra, the chief of the mixed classes are :

1st. Murdhabhishikta, born of a Bráhmaṇ and a daughter of the Kshetriya class, whose duty is limited to the teaching of military exercises. 2nd. Vaidya, or doctor, sprung from a Vaisya woman by a Bráhmaṇ. 3rd. Naishada, or fisherman, born of a female Sudra, by a priest. 4th. Malishya, whose profession is declared to be music, astronomy and cattle herding ! sprung from a Kshetriya and a girl of the Vaisya tribe. 5th. Agra, condemned by Menu to the unaccountable species of degradation of killing and confining such animals as live in holes, but according to the Tantra gifted with the sacred inspiration of poetry, born of a Sudra woman by a man of the warrior tribe. 6th. Karana or Káyasth, professionally a courtier and a scribe, born of a Vaisya and a Sudráni. 7th. Suta, or ostler and charioteer, begotten by a Kshetriya on a woman of the priestly order. 8th. Magadha or itinerant trader, born of a daughter of the military class by a Vaisya. 9th. Vaideha, sprung from the intercourse of a woman of the Bráhmaṇ class with a man of the merchant tribe, degraded to wait on women. 10th. Ayogava, born of a Vaisya woman by a Sudra, having the profession of a carpenter assigned to him ; and so on, till we come to the Chandál, sprung from a Sudra by a girl of the Bráhmaṇ class, whom all authorities concur in placing at the bottom of the list. In this arrangement, from the different ranks assigned to the spurious offsprings above noticed respectively, it will be perceived that Bráhmaṇical ingenuity has attached to female infidelity different shades of guilt, varying, not according to the circumstances of their temptation, but according to the rank of the parties with whom they had unhappily connected themselves !

Menu makes several distinctions amongst the mixed classes. The sons of women only one degree lower than their lovers—the Murdhabhishikta,

Then rank the Káyasth, sprung from a female Sudra by a father of the Vaisya class*; and so on. From a Bráhmaṇ beauty by a Sudra father sprung the Chandál, the “lowest of mortals.” All the occupations, which the sagacity of the Shástras had not previously provided for, are distributed amongst these mixed tribes. From the abhorrence with which they are named in our books, we are led to believe that they must have remained in great isolation for a long while. Eventually, however, the whole body got mixed with the Sudras, with whom they had an affinity, that powerful affinity which unites the oppressed against the oppressors. It is also contended by those, who consider themselves qualified to offer an opinion on the subject, that the Kshetriyas and Vaisyas likewise no longer exist in their purity. All the lower classes have been mixed up into one body, and though there are minor sub-divisions in that body, which are separated by effectual barricades from intercourse with each other, and which dispute for precedence among themselves, there are at present only two grand

the Mahishya, and the Kurana or Káyasth—he places in the first grade. In a lower grade he ranks the sons of women two or three degrees below their lovers, and, placing the Vaidyas at their head, mentions the Naishada, Agra, Suta, Magadha, Vaideha, Ayogava and Chandál in succession. He then goes on enumerating minor subdivisions sprung from the intercourse of these abject tribes.

* The Káyasths of Bengal claim a nobler pedigree, which the Játimálá seems to authorise, their origin being there mentioned, before the subject of the mixed tribes is introduced.

divisions of the community, the Bráhmans and the Varnasankars. The barriers, which hedged in the four original divisions of the Shástras, have long been broken through, and, though a Vaidya and Káyasth regard a barber and washerman with greater abhorrence, than is shewn by a Bráhman towards either of them, in the strict eye of the law they are themselves as impure as those whom they condemn.

In Bengal, where the trammels of caste are, at the present moment, infinitely stronger and more oppressive than in any other part of India, and where the injunctions of the Shástras, and the byc-laws of the institution, are still upheld by the orthodox Hindus, as strictly as they can be under a foreign government, the Bráhmans are divided into three classes, distinguished by the designations of Kulíns, Srutriyas and Bangshajus, a division that was founded on a difference of talents and sanctity, and never intended to be perpetuated by descent. It has now, however, like all other distinctions in the country, become hereditary. The intrinsic superiority of one body over another, with which it originated, has at present no existence ; and the son of a Kulín lays claim to the honors enjoyed by his father, only by virtue of his birth. Next to the Bráhmans rank the Vaidyas, and the Káyasths, each, like the priests, sub-divided into sections, and having its order of Kulíns. These three primary classes amongst us are now, perhaps, the only staunch supporters of old beliefs and institutions. They comprehend almost all of the community who are in easy

circumstances, and who, being less actively engaged in life than the rest of their countrymen, are in a manner compelled to employ themselves, for want of worthier occupation, in soldering the broken links of superstition. The lower tribes are mere cyphers in society, professionally merchants, agriculturists, traders, or artisans, as their circumstances permit them to be. They are not much interested in the preservation of the distinctions of caste, but are in too humble a sphere to think of striking into any new path. Some deviations they have made from the established rules. The trades, for instance, are now promiscuously followed by all classes; and the hereditary transmission of them is fast disappearing as an inviolable ordinance. But more than this has not yet been attempted, nor can more be reasonably expected from men, who must, naturally enough, in all their actions, wish to avoid offending the higher orders.

The nature of the institution of castes has now been sufficiently explained. Its origin, we stated at the outset, is immemorial. Leaving aside its claims to divine parentage as an assumption which bears internal evidence of being altogether fictitious, it is at the present day impossible correctly to determine the time when, or the circumstances under which, it first came into operation in this country. Many conjectures have been hazarded on this point, most of them based on supposed foreign conquests. According to one, the warlike habits and superstitions of the ancient Kshetriyas being considered uncongenial to

the burning plains of Hindustán, the "origin of the military race has been traced so far as the banks of the Jaxartes—to the homes of the Getes, the Cimrii, the Takshacs, the Catti and the Huns. Certain strange customs, such as the marriage of one woman with several brothers, certain peculiar rites, such as the *Ashwamedh Jagya*, and the discovery of certain ancient undecyphered characters in places where the Kurus, the Urus, and the Yadus have reigned, have been regarded as positive proofs of the Scythic origin of those races ; and to the question, "why, under such circumstances, the Bráhmans have been permitted to form themselves into a class superior to the conquerors of the land?" an answer has been ingeniously given to the effect, that, Bráhmanhood was only a subsequent extraction from that body of conquerors, and owed its superiority to peculiar circumstances. The priestly office, it has been urged, was in the earlier ages only a profession, and not a hereditary distinction. It was often combined with the kingly power, oftener still assumed by princes of the royal blood ; but when the *Súrya bangsa*, or descendants of the Sun, found themselves unable to keep up an unequal contest with the more prolific race of the Moon, they began to assume, under the humble veil of religion, greater prerogatives than they were obliged to give up.

Another hypothesis gives to the Bráhmans the credit of having been the first conquerors of the land, and attempts to trace the progress of their conquest in the pages of the first lawgiver himself. *The tract

which lies between the Caggar and the Saraswati, is stated in the sacred institutes to be frequented by gods, and termed Brahnavarta. This has been considered clear enough to mean that it was the first land occupied by the conquerors. A larger space, called Bráhmārshi in the text, and comprehending nearly the whole country generally known by the designation of Hindustán Proper, is set down by a similar hypothesis as the region over which the "progressive spirit" of Bráhmanism next extended its dominion. The whole space between the Himálaya and the Vindhya mountains being also pronounced sacred—Aryavarta, or fit for respectable men to reside in—it has been presumed to mean that the tide of conquest was yet flowing on. Nay, it being laid down that every place, where the antelope grazes in natural freedom, is fit for sacrifice, it has been understood, that the Bráhmans were at that moment contemplating the subjugation of the whole peninsula.

A third theory supposes that India was originally peopled by comparatively uncivilized and defenceless tribes, who were gradually subdued and dispossessed by the more warlike nations of the regions about the Caspian sea. It makes the Sudras the first conquerors of the land. They came, it is supposed, from the north-west, at some very remote period, and, clearing the country of its forests, and of its original races, (the Koles, Kirats, Bheels, Dhángurs, Khoonds, &c.) whom they drove to the mountains, quietly settled down as permanent occupants of the soil. Next came

the Kshetriyas, a different race from the Sudras, but who followed them by the same route, and from the same direction. Last came the Bráhmans, bringing with them a more northern blood than both the races by whom they had been preceded, and also more nerve and energy of character. With fire and sword they established their supremacy in the land, but dreading a renewal of bloody contests, they conceded to the Kshetriyas, by whom perhaps they had been most violently opposed, a place only lower than their own. From the Sudras they had probably met no hindrance, and had nothing to fear; and they reduced them, therefore, to a state of vassalage, from which the nobility of the tribe only were exempted, these forming a separate class under the name of Vaisyas. And this ascendancy, thus acquired by military prowess, was secured by superior civilization and intelligence.

If any one of the above conjectures be correct, it will give to the institution of castes an historical origin.* But we have no certain light on such a view of the subject, and it is clearly contrary to the spirit of the Shástras. Further, neither in the code of Menu, nor in any other work of equal authority and age, is there any allusion to a prior residence of the Hindus in a different country, or any mention of their migration hither; and there is no reason whatever for supposing that they came from Scythia. If it had been maintained that they were sprung from the same root with the Scythians, the assumption might have been allowed on all hands, as less open to objection, because

referring to a period earlier than the historic era. But when it is urged that they were themselves a body of Scythians, who poured into India and conquered it, and who to secure the pre-eminence thus acquired, established the institution of castes, a chain of evidence at once becomes necessary to support the hypothesis, and this the ingenuity of the learned has not yet been able to supply.

Let us not be misunderstood. We do not deny the probability of India, at least a part of it, having been overrun in the general inundations of the barbarians from the great Scythian hive—inundations which have been felt, at some time or other, in almost all the countries of Europe and Asia. All that we contend for, is, that the origin of caste in India is of remoter antiquity than those irruptions. The testimony of Arrian proves that the institution existed prior to the time of Alexander's expedition, or more than three hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era.* That there were Scythian inroads into India of still earlier date, we have no evidence to prove. After the retreat of the Macedonian we read that an independent kingdom was founded by the Greeks in

* It is true that Arrian mentions seven classes instead of four, but that has been explained to be owing to his having confounded civil employments with the divisions of caste. Due allowance must also be made for his incorrectness about particulars, when we remember that Alexander barely touched the outskirts of India, and that his followers had no opportunity of inquiring minutely into the state of things in the heart of the country.

Bactria, and that this kingdom was overturned by the Sakas or Scythians, when it was only one hundred and thirty years old. We may be satisfied with the proofs afforded to us, that, on this occasion, India, west of the river Scinde, was also overrun by the barbarians. But this was too late in the day to establish the point contended for, and, moreover, *east of the* Indus was the powerful empire where Bráhmanism has always existed in its glory. Col. Tod, indeed, speaks of Scythian emigrations in India occurring in the sixth century before Christ, and alludes to one even earlier; but these are mere unsupported assumptions, and even if admitted, evidence will still be wanting to shew that any permanent establishment of their power was then effected by the barbarians. Above all, we must remember that the age of the code of Menu has been allowed, by those least favorable to its pretensions to great antiquity, to be about nine hundred years earlier than that of Christ, and that the date of the origin of caste must be at least as remote, if not much remoter, than the age of the Institutes. If any of the Scythic tribes, therefore, in any of their great migrations, conquered India, they must have got possession of it at a time when the system of caste had already attained its matured perfection; and it appears but reasonable to suppose, in the absence of positive proof to the contrary, that, like all the subsequent conquerors of the country, they effected no change in the manners, customs and institutions of its original inhabitants, but settled in it, if they settled at all, as

a separate and distinct race. There have always been many races amongst us, living in this isolated condition, claiming only the name of Hindus, but denying the authority of the Veds and the Puráns, disregarding the institution of castes, and differing widely in most respects from the great bulk of the people.

With reference to the first hypothesis we would also observe, that, if there be any real similarity of customs and religious observances between the Kshetriyas and the Scythians, we may, on the testimony of Menu, assume that the latter were only an alien branch of the former race. Says the legislator, "Many families of the military class, having gradually abandoned the ordinances of the Veds and the company of the Bráhmans, lived in a state of degradation, as the people of Pandraka, and Adra, those of Dravira and Camboja, the Yavanas and *Sakas*, (understood to mean Scythians) the Paradas and the Pahlavas, the Chinas and some other nations." We should here further mention, that the peculiarities in the Kshetriya character, generally selected as specimens of Scythian manners, are for the most part the general peculiarities of all rude nations. If, leaving these minute points of resemblance, we compare the general character of the two nations, we shall find that white and black are not more dissimilar, than the Scythian and the Kshetriya characters. If, therefore, the Kshetriyas (and this will apply also to the Bráhmans, with respect to the second and third hypotheses,) are of Scythic descent, their character must have undergone

a great change, and that at a very early age of society, so early as the date of the earliest Hindu records. Is this possible? Can it be believed that immediately after their migration they at once found themselves completely changed, when we see, that, since then, their manners have remained for ages as unaltered as the fabled laws of the Medes and the Persians?

The second and third theories, exclusive of the general argument advanced against them, are open to another objection. They both refer to a theocracy, the actual existence of which remains to be proved. The *Mánava Dharma* allows the Bráhmans no interference with the executive government. How is this to be reconciled with the hypothesis that makes them conquerors of the land? Nor does it appear probable that the warlike over-runners of a country, flushed with success, should voluntarily betake themselves to the counting of beads, in preference to martial avocations.

That caste originated in India, as it must have originated in all other countries where it had also prevailed, in the necessities of an early stage of society, appears to us to be the most reasonable hypothesis. In rude ages, while men continue in the condition of hunters and shepherds, the division of labour is unknown, because people do not then yet want a multiplicity of blessings. Every family is then itself the author of its simple accommodations. But as population multiplies, the wants of society increase,

and the inconveniencies arising from the absence of the division of labour, begin to become oppressively palpable. Society thus gets gradually prepared to welcome a change, and any plausible scheme to relieve its necessities, offered at such a juncture, is sure to receive a hearty welcome. Mill supposes, that, when society was in this state in India, some Hindu philosopher, perceiving the advantages which would accrue to his countrymen from a division of employments, conceived the design of classifying the community, and, placed perhaps in circumstances which enabled him to clothe himself with divine authority, found it not difficult to divide them into classes, and to assign to them separate offices and occupations. As fear is the most paramount passion while the human mind is weak and timid, and as, in the earlier ages of society, God is regarded more as the God of vengeance than of love, the priests, or men who had more sagacity than their neighbours, were permitted to form a separate class, and to arrogate to themselves the place of highest distinction. Next to the fear of God, is the fear of evil men ; and the soldier therefore necessarily became a character of importance, and ranked next, and next only, to him who professed to keep the keys of heaven. The fear of starvation gave the husbandman the third rank in society. But luxury was then a thing not cared for, and the arts were yet in too simple a state to attract attention ; the supply of all other demands and the performance of all other services were, therefore, left

to a separate class of men, who, as they could not harp on the fears of the community, were esteemed of less account. The studied hatred with which they have since been regarded, must have been of tardier growth, originating undoubtedly in the natural proneness of human nature to abuse extensive authority.

So far as the simple division of the community goes, the aim of the legislator appears unexceptionable. It is certainly politic in a social system, in its infancy, to secure the order and integrity of all its parts by having separate and distinct offices and employments for each. It is evidently the most natural and the most obvious step for a primitive people, and one which has been adopted by most nations in their first start for improvement. But not content with having effected the separation of the body into classes, our philosophers imagined that it would be wise to take care of its permanence through all ages; and, with this view, thought it necessary to promulgate, still under the veil of divine authority, those strict regulations, which compel the son to tread in the footsteps of his father, bar merit from promotion, and denounce the intermarriage and confusion of castes. This was an unusual course—the first important deviation from the ordinary route. It is impossible now to conjecture what suggested to our legislators the necessity of so strictly preserving the purity of the different sections. Perhaps it originated only in feelings of pride, which revolted at every idea of degradation. The end, however, was not fully attained. The

castes got confused, in spite of all edicts to the contrary. Fortune and beauty held out many temptations, which religion was not strong enough to resist. An unhallowed union of the sexes took place in spite of the anathemas of the law; and the necessities of society having meanwhile extended beyond the narrow limits within which they had been formerly confined, the Varnasankars, instead of being the pests of society, were soon converted to its service, and the lower duties assigned to them. Here, however, was a dead halt. When the institution had reached this stage, it admitted of no further improvement. The wants of society multiplied, and the narrowness of the policy, which had bound succeeding ages to the conveniencies of a barbarous era, began daily to be more and more apparent. But the girths of that policy were too strongly knit to be easily broken. The evil continued to fester. No exertions were made to qualify its virulence, and the effect has been, what might naturally have been expected, that a fertile soil and a genial climate is teeming with a population in want of all the decencies, and of most of what are elsewhere considered the necessities of life.

The nature, origin and distinguishing usages of caste therefore, though professing according to the Shástras to be divinely ordained and essentially religious, seem most likely to belong to a civil institution, perhaps originally founded on the primitive inequality of talents, and on the same principle as *rank* in Europe. But the difference between *rank* in

Europe and *caste* in India, is too palpable now for them to admit of much affinity with each other. Even though the strict discipline of the code of Menu is no longer regarded, and the Bráhmaṇ far from receiving honors invariably, is generally, either a beggar or a cook,* still no merit and no virtue can pass the barriers of the law, and the Sudra can never become a Bráhmaṇ. Rank is accessible to all. It is the distinction arrogated by; or rather conferred upon, worth or greatness, civic merit or learning. It debars none from advancement, fetters no one's intellect. The weaver and the ploughman in England have worked their way to the station of peers, the day-labourers of Spitalfields and Coventry have risen to honor and distinction. The ascent may not be easy, but there are no impassable barriers to oppose the aspiring; no recorded text, nor venerated tradition to gainsay their right. Complete and absolute equality nowhere exists. It is said that even the brute creation have all an idea of precedence; and it is undoubtedly certain that the human race, in all its diversities, has it. Our next door neighbour, if some undefinable circumstance places him a little ahead of us, will look down on us with something like contempt. The shopkeeper curls up his nose at the sight of a pedlar;

* The profession of a cook, however, is not so low in India, as in most other countries. Men of the higher castes only are suffered to follow it, for nobody will partake of food prepared by a person of an inferior order.

the merchant shrugs his shoulders at a shopkeeper, and the remnants of the old school of gentility look down with ill-suppressed scorn on that upstart race, which is quietly elbowing them out of their place. But here the line of separation is too subtle and too fleeting to be injurious. The inferior pays but a reluctant homage to him who thinks himself his superior, and struggles might and main to outstrip him in the long run. The itinerant pedlar in time becomes a shopkeeper, the shopkeeper a merchant, the merchant a gentleman. But caste admits of no such promotions. Independent of merit or demerit, it dooms the great mass of the people to a state of servitude, ignorance and degradation from which nothing can ever elevate them. "Pure in body and mind, humbly serving the three higher classes, mild in speech, never arrogant, ever seeking refuge in Bráhmans principally, the Sudra," says Menu, "may attain the most eminent class," but, adds his quiet unostentatious commentator, the learned Culluca, "in another transmigration" only. Such is the law !

The effects of caste on the character of the Hindus, as a nation, and its influence on the progress of improvement amongst them remain now to be examined. Ward has very correctly and pithily observed, that caste, like the national shoe of China, has rendered the whole population of India cripples. There is no gainsaying this. That the Hindus are as imbecile as cripples, is not to be denied, and that this imbecility has chiefly resulted from the operation of

ill-judged social divisions, is as little to be doubted. Man is a progressive being. In a savage state he is hardly superior in his condition to the other animals of the creation. But he is susceptible of rapid improvement. He ascends from one stage to another in a continued line that seems to have no termination, and proceeds farther and farther at every step from the rest of animated nature. Even the knowledge of the nineteenth century has assigned no limits to his prospects of advancement. There are circumstances, however, under which the human mind, though so beneficently endowed by Providence, will not proceed; or will proceed only in a contrary direction, towards the great goal of brutish intellect. Caste placed the Hindu mind under such peculiarly unfavorable circumstances. Though not ill-adapted to a primitive state of society, its principles were totally opposed to every spirit of progression; in fact, were too contracted and illiberal to suit any period beyond that of actual barbarism. It is true that the occupations it assigned to the Bráhmans, Kshetriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras respectively, are essentially connected with social order in all stages of civilization, since no society can be preserved without religion, government, commerce and mechanical labor; but so are not the restrictions by which they were confined to the separate classes, restrictions which have served only as a bar to the advancement of piety, enterprise and diligence, and an ægis of protection to idleness and iniquity. To award to the learned, the pious, and the good the

highest rank in that society, of which they were the best ornaments, was but an act of justice which no one will undertake to dispute. But to say that none shall be entitled to the same distinction, but such as were lineally descended from those who were originally selected for it, was in fact to subvert those principles, and defeat those intentions on which it was founded; and when, in addition to this, it was prescribed that the descendants of those ancient sages alone, out of the whole body of the people, were to have an exclusive monopoly of letters and religion, the system at once became too monstrous and irrational to answer any end calculated to extend the operations of the human mind.

None but a Bráhmaṇ, declared the Shástras, should read the Veds, or impart religious instruction; and as the Veds and their Angas included all the literature and sciences of the country—grammar, versification, arithmetic and the mathematics—the law thus effectually enjoined ignorance to the rest of mankind. The favored class alone were permitted to read and write, and this privilege they enjoyed undisturbed for ages. The consequence has been a total prostration of intellect and of mental energy, not only in the general mass of the community, but even among that favored class itself. Learning has dwindled down to childish frivolity, and religion to ceremonial purity; and a Bráhmaṇ who can read and explain what his forefathers wrote, is seldom to be met with in the land. Our *pundits* of the present day are a set of lazy, supersti-

tious, weak-minded men, living mostly on the community, without contributing at all to its welfare; having, some of them, a little dexterity in threading the dreams of metaphysics, and the unenviable ability of framing specious arguments for perplexing the plainest truths; or, as is more generally the case, making up the want of even these little qualifications by an affectation of austerity and mystery, which are at all times sufficient to make the vulgar regard them with admiration. The cause of so much deterioration is easily explained. When literature and the sciences were ensured in perpetuity to the Bráhmans, it became no longer their interest to acquire real knowledge and the means of making themselves and their brethren wiser and happier. The arts of imposture held out to them more lucrative employment. To cheat and delude the mass, whom the laws had consigned to ignorance and misery, promised them palpable advantages; and they possessed by birth-right the means of deceiving with impunity. They were the accredited oracles of heaven; religion with all its profits and advantages was exclusively within their grasp; they held a monopoly of spiritual and legal interpretations; the sacred books, and the lips of myriads, who had not the courage to consult either their own reason or their own feelings, vied to do them honor; eternal beatitude was promised to them whether they did or did not perform acts to merit it; wherever their vision extended they perceived nothing but their own adoration. The temptation was too great for human nature to resist,

and it was not resisted. Religion and knowledge were unhesitatingly sacrificed at the altar of avarice, and so completely that it will be difficult now to find out a single man of the sacred order in all India, whose duplicity does not far exceed his learning. Such are now the descendants of the ancient Bráhmans whom antiquity never spoke of but with praise. Such are the grave instructors of our youths !

And what do they teach? Assuredly all they can. But O! how insufficient is that all to answer any purpose of a sound education ! A Hindu school is a school but in name, where a few trite, common-place acquirements only are picked up, together with absurd lessons of an extravagant theology, disfigured with metaphysical errors and logical subtlety,—a medley perhaps more baneful in its consequences than absolute ignorance itself. The improvement and amelioration of the mind is never thought of ; there is not a single book calculated to enlighten it ; the tutor does not even profess to impart what he never acquired himself ; and the student is thrown upon the world, stocked with odd notions, and a narrow-minded and illiberal study, which never rises to the idea of practical utility. Even this little, ill-founded education is confined to the Bráhmans alone. To the other classes, which constitute the multitude, literature holds out neither its honors, nor its emoluments. On the contrary, the interdictions and anathemas of the scriptures repel them from the pale of enlightenment, while the hereditary nature of their duties takes away

from them the power and even the inclination to swerve from the beaten path. Hopes and fears, even the worst evils of life, will often call forth the most latent talents of the human mind. But even in his hopes, and in his fears, and in his ills too, a Hindu is not his own master. He dares not think, he dares not put his own shoulder to the wheel in any difficulty. The Brāhman with his prayers and his rites must come to help him at every emergency. Among the lower classes, therefore, among men who dare not exercise their own natural judgment, education has achieved no triumphs worth telling. In other countries the walls of separation, which divide the learned from the unlearned, are never so strictly guarded but that the knowledge of the few finds out a vent to spread itself, by slow and imperceptible degrees, among the many. But in India liberal ideas, like a plague or other dangerous epidemic, have been more carefully watched over. A flexible and living language was left uncultivated, lest it should serve as a channel of communication between the belligerent powers. The learned wrote and spoke in Sanskrit, and the object of the designing few thus remained secure; for what the learned wrote, the learned alone could read. Sanskrit was not a language for all classes, all ages, and all sexes. It did not open the stores entrusted to it to general discussion. And the vulgar idiom was a jargon.

Even to the arts, perfection, or any thing approaching it, is denied by that very institution which

was originally, according to the most reasonable hypothesis, ordained to secure their improvement. That a man will do any thing better than another man, because his fathers did it before him, is a sorry conjecture; and all the arguments which the looms of Dacca, or the brocades of Benares, can marshal in its favor, are nothing to the fact, that no improvements of any utility were known to the country similar to those now being made under European superintendence. The acquirements of one generation are not best transmitted to another, when transmitted from father to son. Nor is a father necessarily the best of tutors, nor a son the aptest of pupils. On the contrary, the strict confinement of artizans to a tribe is calculated to create the unfortunate habit of being mechanically persuaded, that, "whatever is, is right," a habit decidedly inimical to innovations, and, therefore, diametrically opposed to improvement. We accordingly find, that, while in other lands, where no such provision ever existed, or, if existing, was early done away with, the arts are now in such a state as would almost justify us in supposing that they have there attained their final perfection, in India they retain almost the same simple condition in which they were known to the ancient worthies of the land. Is this a gratuitous assumption that will not bear the test of proof? Far from it. There is no test which will not prove its accuracy. Here, we have the Vaidyas, a separate class, for administering medicine, and yet the whole country will hardly yield a dozen regu-

lar physicians, whose practice is really founded on science. The rest are all mere quacks, illiterate as the community in general, and sporting with the lives and health of their fellow-men, only by virtue of their birth.* We have the Kánsharis, a separate class, for founding brass and preparing brazen utensils, and yet the sort of utensils in use amongst us are very poor and few, and the methods of fluxing and compounding metals far from being, what they have long been regarded, perfect. Apart from the Vaisyas, who are now extinct, we have the Águris and the Kaibartas, separate classes for agriculture, and yet we look in vain for a contented and independent peasantry, or for a solid and rational system of the art founded upon clear and intelligible principles. The Bengal farmer is more indebted to nature for a crop, than to his own industry or management, and has neither the skill nor the diligence with which an English farmer cultivates a waste or a fen. A country plough is one of the rudest instruments imaginable, and all the other implements of the trade are of equally clumsy construction; while miserable mud cottages, rudely thatched over, testify, in characters too plain to be mistaken, the wretched condition of the agriculturists themselves. We have a separate

* To convey perhaps an idea of this scarcity of medical skill in the country, it is stated in our ancient books, that one of the fourteen *Ratnas*, or precious things, which the gods churned out of the ocean, was a learned physician.

class of potters in the Kumbhakárs, and yet the pots in use here are of the most miserable sort, and there is nothing resembling porcelain or Quen's-ware in the country. We have a separate class of weavers, and in the manufacture of cotton and the labours of the loom, the Hindus do surpass a great many nations, but, for all that, it is not the less a fact that cheap clothing, we mean of course cheapness combined with decency, was unknown here, till exports from England supplied the Indian market. The Karmakárs, or blacksmiths, form a separate sect, and yet their work, except what is now being performed under the superintendence of foreigners, is generally very clumsy and ill-finished. The joiners too are a separate class, but till recently "they had neither rule, compass, nor even a gimblet" to work with. The Rajakas, or washermen, have made so little progress in their art, that, to this day, the wash is generally made of the urine of cows and the ashes of the plantain. Soap has only recently come into use, and so also have ironing, clear-starching, and calendering. The Swarnakárs, or goldsmiths, are very imperfect artizans; those only excepted, who have profited by the instruction, or served under the superintendence, of European tradesmen. The manufacture of fire-works, paper-making, book-binding, book-selling, &c. were trades unknown among the ancient Hindus. Nay, there were no tailors in India previous to the Mahomedan conquest, the garments formerly worn by the natives consisting simply of one or more

sheets of muslin folded round the body. In truth, none of the conveniences of life ever existed in this country in that state of improvement in which they are to be found in Europe. Almost all our exports to this day consist of raw materials. Nothing is sent out that has either taste or elegance; while our imports clearly show that our tradespeople in no respect rival those of the Western world. We are yet too rude and ignorant to make any refined use of the inexhaustible natural resources of our own country; and even now, as has been the case from age to age, those resources are freely yielded up to other nations to work with and profit by.

It has been argued that the hereditariness of professions is to be met with in all countries. It is not uncommon even in England for a clergyman, a lawyer, or a soldier to educate his sons for his own profession. True. But neither the clergyman, nor the lawyer, nor the soldier, do any such thing under the conviction of a moral obligation. They are only actuated by a feeling of partiality for what long acquaintance has rendered dear to each. But if any of the sons happens to find no inclination to the occupation of his father, there is neither hesitation nor difficulty in transferring him to a business more consonant to his taste. It is not so in India. Whether he likes it or not, the Hindu youth must follow the business bequeathed to him, or sink in the regard and estimation of the community. It is an obligation enjoined by the Shástras, which allow him no other

alternative, and which thus tacitly deprive him of a natural privilege, enjoyed by his brethren in all other parts of the world. Of late the force of this obligation has indeed somewhat slackened, and a commensurate degree of improvement has already been derived from the circumstance.

The arts, we have said, could not be well cultivated under a system of hereditary transmission ; still less could those prosper which we distinguish by the name of "the fine arts." These generally reach the summit of perfection in those countries, where religion consists in the worship of idols and images, and where magnificent temples and imposing decorations are considered essential to such worship. We see accordingly that triumphal arches, towers and pyramids, statues and pictures, the speaking canvas and the breathing marble, are glories that have belonged almost exclusively to heathen lands, and which modern art, in spite of her most strenuous efforts, has only succeeded to imitate partially, and at a servile distance. But even these poor substitutes for religion have left no trace in India. Sunk in greater vice and impiety than Greece, or Rome, or Egypt in their worst of days, she has no exquisite remains of art like any of them, to astonish the world with, and plead for her guilt. Of painting, her specimens are as rare as they are wretched ; her sculptures, though more numerous, display only a total ignorance of anatomy, and an inexcusable disregard of proportions ; and even her celebrated cave-temples refuse to testify that she ever made any extraordi-

nary progress in architecture. Why is this so? The artists of India have not surely been wanting in dexterity and industry. But the restrictions of caste deadened every spirit of emulation, and thus effectually closed up the door of improvement.

But these are slight evils compared to the moral turpitude they have occasioned. The superabundance of men, in the respective professions to which they are assigned, not having been provided for by the laws, the supernumerary hands, for want of better occupation, have taken to all sorts of crimes to obtain subsistence. Historians mention that there are castes for thieves, and that men are systematically brought up to consider robbery as their hereditary occupation. This at least is certain that there are outcasts, who, driven from the pale of society by oppression, have adopted vagrant and murderous habits, and live in the performance of the most inhuman and immoral deeds. There are also sharpers and thieves by profession, to whom no ray of instruction has revealed the iniquity of their career, and in whom the feeble stirrings of conscience are smothered under the hardness of their lot. The great mass of society, too, being destitute of education, and in want of all the principles of morality, herd together simply to corrupt each other, and eke out for themselves those courses only, which lead to mere carnal gratifications. At an early age they enter the broad road of iniquity, crimes are committed which, in the language of the Apostle, "it is a shame to speak of," and receiving

no check either from education, example, or the state of public morals, these unfortunate young men hurry recklessly onwards to destruction. Religion is a by-word in the land, and has been so corrupted, that it has become a prolific source of hatred, cruelty and crime. The ritual is a collection of superstitious ceremonies which will make all laugh who can laugh at the follies of men, and bring tears into the eyes of those who cannot regard the progress of human depravity without emotion. The doctrines of the Veds, however imperfect when compared with the light which has since been afforded to the world, contain a great degree of morality, to which the belief now in force amongst us has no pretension. The reading of those doctrines is confined to one isolated class, while the great bulk of the people have embraced every fantastic opinion which their designing superiors have thrown in their way. They have deified their heroes, their legislators, and their priests; nay, unsatisfied even with so much impiety, they have in their utter ignorance, ranked stocks, and stones, and creeping things with God. Thus has the dignity of religion been insulted, and human intellect reduced to a level with brutishness. Nor could this state of things have by any means been avoided in a country, where to become a religious guide, it is merely necessary to be born a Bráhmaṇ. The priests, in almost all other countries the most moral section of the community, are here busy, not only in deceiving, but in setting evil examples of all hues and descriptions; and the rest, enjoined by

the Shástras to look up to them as to gods, think it no harm to imitate their superiors. Not a sin is there which one, tempted to commit it, may not find a sanction for in the conduct of the clergy. Far from spending their days in religious austerity, as they are required to do in the Shástras, they squander their time in the most shameful practices of irreligion. Some efforts have been made from time to time to reform this crying abuse. But the system admitting of no improvement, such efforts have never been crowned with success. On the contrary, they have often served only to aggravate that depravity which it was their object to cure.* The poor Sudra is, perhaps, in point of morality, a little better than the Bráhmaṇ, being by the very circumstance of his degradation, withheld from many abominations which Bráhmaṇs alone, habituated as they have been to regard themselves placed above all temporal jurisdiction, may commit with impunity. Cicero, speaking of the Roman senate of his time, says, that "a more scandalous company of sharpers never sat at a gaming-table," a compliment which can be applied, with perhaps even greater felicity, to our clergy, only that their right to pre-eminence extends to every sort of guilt, and is not circumscribed to thieving alone. There is no crime, that has a name

* In Bengal, Bulál Sen created an order of merit (Kulinhood) to encourage learning and religious sanctity, but this, without at all answering his object, has since been perverted into a most shameful and revolting system of debauchery.

in the dark records of human frailty; which they are incapable of perpetrating. Says Governor Holwell, "never any murder or atrocious crime came before us, but it was proved in the end a Bráhmaṇ was at the bottom of it;" and, according to Ward, Kulín Bráhmaṇs have lately been found "to a most extraordinary extent, among the most notorious and dangerous dacoits." In the golden age of Hinduism we are assured that the priests were habitually employed in austere devotion. But now, alas for human nature! they are otherwise. The innocent sheep have turned into ravening wolves—habitual devotees into graceless sinners.

Nor has the social and national character of the community suffered less from this baneful institution. Instead of four divisions, we have now more than forty; and all of them, for all social purposes, as distinct from each other as the nations of Europe are from those of Africa. There are sub-divisions among the Bráhmaṇs, and there are sub-divisions among the Sudras; and these have no fraternal feelings in common, and are to each other little less than utter strangers. So far as the rules of caste will allow, the Hindus are assuredly as hospitable as most other nations; but it is a sufficient excuse for not extending their hospitality further, that the object belongs to a lower class, or to a class unknown. Alms to a large amount are given to religious mendicants, and instances of the most amiable benevolence towards the brute creation are also to be seen. There are those who think it a virtue to feed even

the most venomous reptiles on earth, and, though the cases are rare, men have been known to tend serpents with milk and bread ; but a man will turn away with calm indifference from a perishing brother, if he belongs to a lower class than himself. No misfortune and no affliction will entitle the Chandál to the pity and relieving sympathy of the Bráhmaṇ, or even of the Sudra ; nor will any necessity or national danger yoke them side by side in one common cause. Caste has dismembered society into the most heterogeneous portions, and woven out distinctions into such endless variety as defy all soldering. There are orders, for instance, into whose houses no Bráhmans will enter ; others into whose houses they will enter, but partake of no food therein ; others, again, in whose houses they will eat fruit, but nothing more substantial. The Bráhmaṇ soldier will not eat what has been defiled by the touch of his Kurmi associate, and, if he enters his cook-room, will throw away his untasted meal and his cooking utensils. Nay, it is well known, that soldiers, when about to suffer capital punishment on the gallows, have often applied for permission to adjust the cords with their own hands, rather than be polluted by the touch of a man of an inferior order in the last moments of their existence. A hearty national union of a people so constituted can never be hoped for, prior to the complete and utter annihilation of those evil institutions which have given birth to such unfortunate prejudices. In most of the Hindu cities the towns were formerly divided

into parts, where the different classes took up their distinct quarters, and, though such divisions are not very nicely observed now, still traces of them are to be met with everywhere. In some districts the orders considered most impure were not permitted to venture on the public roads, lest these should be defiled. *It is but too true that these wretched people* have, in consequence of the utter hopelessness of their condition, contracted many abominable and disgusting habits, almost justifying the abhorrence with which they are regarded; but no one will find any difficulty in determining whether their loathsome propensities are the cause, or the consequence, of the scorn in which they are held.

Some well-disposed authors have given the Hindus a character for benevolence. Others, however, have strongly disputed this indulgent award; and, in spite of a natural wish to coincide in opinion with the former, we must admit that the latter have the best of the argument. We have said that large sums are expended in India in religious charity; they admit as much, but urge that ostentatious alms-giving is not benevolence. In Christian lands the poignancy of diseases and distempers loses a great deal of its keenness from the kindly feeling with which it is tended; for poverty there is a provision in every parish to afford relief; and for "those outcasts of human society, who infest populous cities," there are refuges to afford shelter, when, loathed and detested by men, they return to God. Human misery has not yet assumed a form so

repulsive as to disarm the pious solicitude of the genuine Christian. It is by this test that they desire to examine the native character. If it has really so much of benevolence, as some have allowed to it, where are the memorials of its works of love, *asylums* for the blind and the insane, *hospitals* for the sick, and *refuges* for the unfortunate and the poor? Ruins of big temples, the records of an abominable superstition, are to be seen in different parts of India; but where shall we seek for even the ruin of an hospital or an asylum?

The cowardice and baseness of the Hindu character are, also, in some measure, *attributable to caste*. From the earliest times, even to the era of modern invasions, every ferocious barbarian has carried desolation and death, from door to door, throughout the land. Why, but because the profession of arms, though honored by a place second only to priest-craft, was confined to a tribe. Those to whom the *Shástras* have assigned more peaceful occupations will on no account engage in war. The fighting classes, descendants of the original Kshetriya race, are well known to be exceedingly valiant, and pertinaciously stubborn. They will resist aggression, nay, often, will resent the slightest affront, with their lives. Hence the Moguls, after the conquest of nearly the whole of Hindustán, met with violent opposition in subjugating such a little tract of country as Rájasthán. But there are whole districts where the descendants of the Kshetriyas do not dwell, and in such places the people will

not fight even for their lives and their homes, nor consider it a disgrace to seek safety in flight.

There are those who impute to misgovernment most of the evils to which we have alluded, and to a certain extent they are undoubtedly right. The oppression and fanaticism of most of the Mahomedan rulers were of a nature too violent and illiberal not to have affected the national character of the conquered, and their cruelty and caprice must certainly have generated in their Hindu subjects the vices of slavery. But the experiment of misgovernment has been tried in other lands, as well as in India, and its outturn precisely ascertained. It gives birth to a great many evils, but not to all the evils which obtain amongst us. Thus, for instance, it may make a conquered people the slaves of their conquerors, but it will not make them the less brothers to each other. It must also be remembered, that foreign rule and misgovernment are themselves but the natural effects of a more potent antecedent cause, and that false religion, with its brood of evil laws and customs, must take the odium of having brought them down upon the country.

The depressing and demoralizing effects of caste on the mental, moral, social and national character of the Hindus, which we have adverted to, have not been unattended by the most injurious influence in retarding the progress of improvement in the land. Civilization has been brought to a stand still, or rather has been compelled to retrograde from the little

advancement she is said to have made in the earlier ages, when Hinduism was either not of so debasing a nature as it now is, or the rules of caste not so perniciously strict; habits of indolence, to which the inhabitants of tropical climates have such a physical tendency, have become confirmed; reason, for want of exercise, has been weakened and paralyzed; repugnance to investigation, strictly enforced by the Shástras, has deprived the mind of its natural energy; and, all causes conspiring, India, which imparted to Tyre and Palmyra their ancient magnificence, gave Venice her tiara'd battlements and exhaustless wealth, and accelerated the march of civilization throughout the world, has suffered herself to be outstripped by all her admirers. It is a vulgar proverb, but generally not the less a true one, that, when things are at their worst, they mend. In India, however, things have been at their worst for many centuries, without a change. More than two thousand years have past since the time of Alexander's expedition. Within that period how many fluctuations have occurred in the world, how many mighty revolutions for good and for evil! Empires have risen, flourished and declined. Rome was founded, and rose to the summit of her imperial splendour. From that height she was hurled down again; and the descendants of those barbarians, who trampled upon and crushed her greatness, have in their turn risen to the highest state of civilization. But India has been sleeping in her semi-barbarism through all

this weary while. In other respects she, too, has felt many changes. Oppressor after oppressor has trampled upon her destinies, dynasties have displaced dynasties, tyrants have succeeded to tyrants, vallies have been filled up, rivers have changed their courses, but the state of civilization, which the Greek historians have described, continues, or at least has hitherto continued, unaltered and unimproved. It is only recently that encroachments have been attempted on time-hallowed prejudices ; and such as have succeeded, however partially, have not done so without encountering the most violent opposition. Even Christianity, so remarkable for its easy triumphs in all other parts of the world, has here met with nothing but impediments, and this, while its worth is freely admitted by the intellectual section of the community. The good sense of that section has not failed to appreciate its greater simplicity and superior rationality, as compared with the absurd polytheism of their countrymen, and most of them, we believe, will be found prepared to admit that Christ's gospel of salvation holds out the only adequate remedy for the multifarious complaints of their country. But, however willing such minds may be to embrace a religion, which not only has nothing revolting in its nature, but, on the contrary, has many ineffable charms to entice the heart, caste sets an almost insuperable barrier between them and all radical changes. The open avowal of a new doctrine, or the open assumption of new customs, banishes the daring offender from the bosom of his family, without giving

him a sufficient estimation in a new community to counterbalance his loss; and no one, who is not prepared to relinquish almost his all on earth, can embrace a new religion or be a candid reformer.

From what has already been said on the subject, the reader will have perceived, that both the restrictions of caste, and the solemn religious obligations by which they are enforced, if they betray not the most morbid political corruption in the government, testify at least an unpardonable inattention on the part of our legislators to the real interests of their country. If the original founders of the institution had other views than those of raising themselves above the rest of the community, their successors too early succeeded to alter their design, whatever it might have been, and to pervert it into a disgusting and almost impious arrogation of undeserved supremacy. The effects of that perversion have been told at length. Knowledge was discouraged for its palpable hostility to this arrogation of pre-eminence, and the exercise of the right of private judgment for the same reason strictly prohibited. To doubt its authority was to remove it altogether, to probe its foundations was to sap them. The power to doubt and to examine was therefore wisely withheld. The designing few knew well wherein lay their security, and they bound with double care and strictness such as they feared might rebel. It was impossible, as we have shown already, for prosperity or advancement to find a place under such restrictions. Nowhere has

any nation ever risen to distinction under similar difficulties. We shudder even to anticipate what the state of enlightened Europe would have been, at this moment, if the minds of her children had been held in such thralldom for so many successive ages. The Copernican mysteries had then to this day remained unrevealed, Bacon and Descartes had not explored the priceless mines of philosophy, Columbus and Gama had not extended the limits of discovery, the mariner's compass and the steam-engine had remained unneeded and unknown, and the Reformation of Religion itself had continued unattempted. India would not then have been so far behind her in the orbit of civilization ; for the condition of the sisters, or, as the Athenian poet, with a slight degree of excusable partiality, has designated them, the mistress and the handmaid, had nearly been alike. Revert the picture for a moment, unbind the shackles which fetter this unhappy country. Shall we not straight see her shake off her long sleep, or rather, the stupefaction of ages, and, flinging far the swaddling clothes which embarrass her, begin to develop her hidden powers? Shall we not see the learning of Europe find a ready response in the East, and, by the tacit harmony which governs all reformations, the condition of the latter rise, in sure and rapid gradations, to a level with that of the former ? The backwardness of things would instantly begin to depart, and the Hindu would cease to be miserable and poor amidst the unmeasured riches of his native land. The inventions of art and the

researches of science would no longer be despised, nor confined to the lower castes alone ; nor would the greatest of the land consider it a shame “ to be discovered in his laboratory smutted with charcoal, or in the midst of his tools covered with shavings.” Rich, invaluable discoveries, which the Bráhmans are doubtless entitled to the honor of having kept back from the people, and from themselves, would then see the light; men would dare to think, to reason, to examine those things which now require only a blind belief; the casuistic morality, in which the duties of man towards God and towards his fellows, are wholly reduced to his duties to a certain order of men, would give place to higher principles ; and a light would be kindled in the bosom of error which would shine on all objects around it. And why should not this come to pass ? Why should the advancement of a whole nation, towards the great object pointed out by reason, be for ever impeded ? Why should the development of the human powers, and nature’s longing for a state of equilibrium continue to be thwarted ?—and all for perpetuating the pre-eminence of a class now despicable in literary attainments, contemptible in manners, and disgusting in morality ? Reason allows no distinctions between man and man, but such as answer important ends in the social union ; and those are confined to merit, or to office, the one to foster a generous emulation, and the other to secure order in the union itself. We accordingly see that the original principles of equality are everywhere modified, either

by the shades of intellectual superiority which diversify the human race, or by the proportions of power meted out to individuals by the general suffrage, or supposed general suffrage, of society. But distinctions confined to classes, and to which the only entry is by birth, can answer no useful purpose, and have therefore no theory to stand upon; and one in reading of them is compelled to exclaim with the dramatist—"Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?"

Nor has experience proved the practical usefulness of the institution of castes. If it originated with an idea of securing improvement to the arts and sciences, to learning, philosophy and morality, it has lasted too long. None of the arts and sciences ever reached to any extraordinary degree of perfection in India; and the history of the Hindus bears testimony to but a very ordinary degree of education, and a very low degree of morality. It is true that the Greeks before the time of Pythagoras used to travel into India for instruction; but that, we believe, proves nothing more than what requires no proof, that the Hindus were a much older people, and had attained, even at that age, a certain degree of improvement. But that their learning, even when it thus stood as a model to foreign admirers, had anything solid or remarkable in it, except

its subtlety, we must be permitted to doubt; and that the national character, on the other hand, was ever a depraved one, is borne out by the testimony of the code of Menu itself, wherein are mentioned penances and punishments, under the criminal law, for pollutions which must remain unnamed. Naturally the Hindu mind is assuredly as capable of intellectual and moral improvement as that of any other race; and it has exhibited too, in divers cases, surprising abilities, so far as they have been developed now, or in remote antiquity. But, never coming into collision with other geniuses, or with the whole of even his own community, never associating with foreigners, never availing himself of the great advantages derivable from voyages and travels, and ever shut out from the adoption of every thing foreign by his laws, the Hindu has not profited by the revolution of ages, and is still walking in the midst of comparative darkness, while his brethren of the Western world, who were sunk in primeval gloom when he saw the light, are basking in the blaze of enlightenment. He is absolutely forbidden to pass beyond the limits of his native country, and is therefore prevented from exercising that spirit of investigation and research which is the only fabricator of greatness. He is forbidden to borrow ideas of religion, and even maxims of policy, from other nations, and is necessarily left far behind by them all. And from immemorial custom he is strictly enjoined never, and on no account, to deviate; and we see him, therefore, at the present moment, a victim

to the prejudices of the remotest antiquity. The shockingly corrupt manners of the Bráhmans, the gross ignorance of all classes, their general apathy to strike into any new path, their proverbial incompetency to form any bold design, and the complete disruption of those bands of society which bind men into a brotherhood, these are the only consequences which caste has given birth to; and, so apparent have become its misdoings, that, even the most bigotted Hindu, with all his prejudices for the good old times, will now hardly venture to affirm, that, if the past could be recalled, and the arrangement of society entrusted to him, he would re-propose the system at present in operation. Why is it then allowed to obtain longer in the land? The time is come when, like a hardened felon, it ought at once to be arraigned before the tribunal of public opinion, its hoary villanies exposed, and the verdict of perpetual expatriation passed on it.

In marshalling arguments against the institution of castes, we must not here omit to urge another powerful reason why the system should immediately be brought to an end. The higher classes are bound down to preserve their orthodoxy only by the restrictions and terrors of the law, the pride of their positions being considered a sufficient pledge for their good faith. But the case is different—very different—with the lower orders. Each of these divisions has a class of men, called *parámániks*, members of which exercise the most unlimited inquisitorial powers, each within his own jurisdiction of one or more villages,

prying even into the minutest circumstances of life, and interfering with every domestic incident, unless bought off with a bribe. A son or a daughter cannot be given away in marriage, friends cannot be entertained, ceremonies cannot be performed, without feeding these social harpies ; and if a wife or daughter is suspected of frailty, or a son or brother accused of apostacy, the unfortunate family is infallibly shorn to the quick and reduced to beggary, with not even the privilege of complaining left them, when their caste is spared. Thus domestic happiness, the dearest of all dear things on earth, is subjected to the vulgar intrusion and despotic interference of men who make their inquisitiveness the source of their wealth. If there had been no other arguments against caste, this alone were sufficient to cry shame upon it ; for who can regard an inquisition like this without aversion and horror ?

The contradictory statements of the Hindu Shástras, also, suggest arguments inimicable to the perpetuation of the system. Says the 168th verse of the second chapter of the Institutes of Menu,—The Bráhmaṇ, who, not having studied the Veds, applies diligent attention to a different and worldly study, soon falls to the condition of a Sudra, and his descendants after him ; and we read also, that Vashishta cursed his hundred sons, and degraded them to the rank of Chandáls. On the other hand, the 42nd verse of the 7th chapter of Menu mentions, that Viśwamitra, the son of Gadhi, acquired the rank of

a priest, though born in the military class. Vyasa, says also a very venerated tradition, raised a Sudra to Bráhmaṇhood. The descendants of that convert are still to be found in Bengal. The other Bráhmans, it is true, despise them, but that does not overthrow the fact. Nay, Vyasa himself, divested of his sacred legendary character, legitimately belongs but to one of the mixed classes, being the issue of a rape committed by an ascetic on the daughter of a fisherman; yet he was the great compiler of the Veds, and, of course, a Bráhmaṇ. Achala Muni, says the Vajra Suchi, quoting the Smṛiti, was born of an elephant, Kesa Pingala of an owl, Agastya Muni from an Agasti flower, Kausika from the *kusa* grass, Kapila from a monkey, Gautáma from a creeper, Drona Áchárya from an earthen pot, Taittrii Rishi from a partridge, Paraswa Ráun from dust, Sringa Rishi from a deer, Vashishta from a courtesan, and Nárad Muni from a female spirit-seller. It is difficult, indeed, clearly to understand the allegorical meaning of an elephant, an owl, a flower, a blade of grass, a monkey, a creeper, a pot, a bird, dust, and a deer, in connection with the birth of some of the above-named sages. But it is clear that these oriental metaphors are only meant to conceal their low origin. Yet all these individuals were Bráhmans. It were vain to urge that the defect of their birth was probably only on the mothers' side, and that they derived their Bráhmaṇhood from their fathers. Such an assertion would be contrary to the spirit of the Shás-

tras, else, wherefore are the Vaidyas, the Nishadas and the Murdhabhisiktás classed with the impurer tribes ? Nay, it is clearly mentioned in Menu, verse 5th, chapter 10th, that “they only who are born in a direct order of wives, *equal in class*, and virgins at the time of marriage, are to be considered as the same in class with their fathers.” The ascetics above named, it may therefore be presumed, became Bráhmans solely by the force of their piety. Valmiki, too, the great epic poet of India, was by birth a Sudra, and raised himself, no doubt by the force of his talents, to the highest order. We read, also, that there have been Bráhmans of the Kaibarta Kul, the Rajaka Kul, and the Chandál Kul, all conspiring to suggest that there was a time when Bráhmanhood was nothing more than a mere order of merit, to which the good and the virtuous, whatever might have been their position in life, were admitted. Divers passages will be found in almost all the Shástras, corroborating this hypothesis. It is written in many places, that the signs of Bráhmanhood are the possession of truth, mercy and benevolence, and the unflinching practice of the strictest asceticism. Sukra Áchárjya also says, in explanation of certain sacred texts, that the gods take no heed of castes, but deem him to be a Bráhman who is a good man, although he belongs to the vilest order. Says also Baisham Payani Rishi, addressing Yudhis-thira, the son of Pándu,—The qualifications of a Bráhman are patience in suffering, guiltlessness of violence and wrong, not eating flesh, and not hurting sentient

things, not taking that which belongs to another, mastering covetous affections and sensual desires, and having an absolute indifference to the world ; these, says he, with the possession of truth, mercy, benevolence and contrition, constitute Bráhmañhood. Again, says he, Bráhmañhood depends neither on race, nor on birth, nor on the performance of ceremonies. If a Chandál is virtuous, he becomes a Bráhmañman. Whoever in this life ever does well, and is ever ready to benefit others, spending his days and nights in good acts, is a Bráhmañman. What then should prevent these doctrines from being carried out now, not partially, as they seem to have been in the mythological periods, but sweepingly, so as to reduce caste to a mere civic distinction ?

We may also here observe, with reference to the monastic orders in India, that the rules which regulate their establishment and preservation are contrary to the spirit and principles of caste. All distinctions are levelled, on admission into most of these bodies. The twice-born classes rend their sacred threads, and all renounce on oath their rank and place in society. The secret observances of the Bámácháris, also, authorised, it is said, by the Tantras, permit the votaries, however diversified their castes may be, to eat together the offerings of the ritual ; but the circumstances of their worship are of too diabolical a nature for a place in this essay. Vaishnavas, likewise, of different classes associate at their meals ; and there seems to be no prohibition whatever in the code of Menu

against eating together, except with women and the Sudras, which, if done, is still declared expiable, as provided for in chapter 11th, verse 153, by living on barley gruel for a week—a punishment so lenient, judging from the usual stern principles laid down by the legislator, as might justify us in presuming that he did not regard the fault in the same heinous light in which it is now regarded by orthodox Hindus.

The great strictness with which the regulations of caste were formerly regarded, exists no longer. Hinduism, hitherto unchanged, has since shown itself to be by no means altogether unchangeable. Men have become lax in their adherence, and in their faith, and many violations of its rules are daily committed with impunity. The unnatural efforts of man to bind down his brother, cannot prevail for ever. Laws essentially partial and absurd, and at the same time intricate and severe, can never have eternal influence over the human mind. Even good and evil passions, though by nature opposed to each other, coalesce, at the most partial dawn of knowledge and civilization, to upset their authority, and to deride their restrictions. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that from the bosom of the country itself have arisen insidious opponents to its orthodox doctrines: nor is it to be regretted that such is the case. It is to be regretted, only, that our reformers are generally men of licentious habits and dissipated character, and that a love for food proscribed by the Shástras, and a morbid anxiety for pro-

miscuous intercourse with females of all orders, are the chief causes of their liberalism. It is to be regretted that bad husbands and bad fathers, the lovers of beef and the victims of burgundy, men who have been outlawed from the pale of their own fraternity, and have no alternative but to kick against it, have taken the lead. It is this that to a good cause has brought a bad name, and deterred healthier minds from marshalling under the same banner. The best of the community have thus been thrown into the rear; and, if the truth must be told, preferring to be called bigots rather than drunkards, they have lent the weight of their character, talents and importance to a cause which they earnestly and heartily despise. But this state of things cannot last long. Nor would it be a compliment to the national character, if it did. To break the chains imposed on the human mind, to overthrow the barriers which oppose the free intercourse of thought, is a glorious enterprise. It is such an undertaking as has immortalized in other lands the names of a Luther and a Calvin, a Huss and an Erasmus. Now is the time for effecting a revolution in this country, such as they did in Europe. Now is the time for all to co-operate for its success. The school-master is abroad. Hinduism has received a shock to its very foundations. Its authority is questioned, its doctrines derided. Idolatry has no doubt still its votaries, and the institution of castes its admirers; but the sincere devotion and unfeigned admiration, with

which they were respectively regarded in former ages, have now declined to a shaken belief, and an unsteady attachment. The Bráhmans, no longer the immaculate body of the Shástras, and drudging for their livelihood in almost all trades and professions, have lost much of their religious influence; while the Sudras, however willing still to observe an outward show of veneration towards the clergy, and to shape their opinions and manners according to their fiat, in all matters of petty importance, are compelled, by their position in life, to feel that they are now far from being the powerless serfs they have hitherto been. Now, therefore, is the time to strike for the complete annihilation of Bráhmanism. Apathy at such a crisis must assuredly be criminal, as it will serve to give health and strength to a decaying evil, which, though a living and operative reality at the present moment, wants but one powerful throttling to strangle it for ever. And there is no plea that will justify it. What, if the profligate and the licentious, to serve their own ends, have set us the way? Must we therefore fall back from the breach which they have made, and turn traitors to our principles? or shall we dare to question the power of the Omnipotent to bring forth good out of evil, beauty out of deformity, and harmony out of confusion? Now is the time for all to co-operate. It is not a private or personal struggle which we are summoned to support. It is a contest of principle and opinion, a contest between the genius of civilization and the

evil angel of ignorance. In such an encounter it is almost impious to doubt where success must eventually settle. Let all, then, gird up their loins who profess to reverence reason, and aspire for intellectual freedom; let us do it under a conviction that no power on earth can help us, if we do not help ourselves. The British Government has done much to allay our sufferings and elevate our national character. It may yet do more, for much remains undone. But all the laws that ever were enacted will not render a vicious, ignorant and superstitious people intelligent, virtuous and happy. The deadly Upas, whose noxious exhalations have made us what we are, must first be uprooted, ere we can reasonably expect to reap any solid advantages from even the most enlightened administration on the face of the earth.

HINDU FEMALE EDUCATION.

THE education of Hindu women is now receiving more consideration than it appears ever to have done before. Such being the fact, we consider ourselves called upon to employ a portion of our time and attention on the subject. The question is one of great importance. It has also the further advantage of being very interesting. We therefore feel assured, that by no class of our readers will our dissertation on it be regarded as ill-timed or intrusive, especially, at a juncture like this, when the whole structure of native society is undergoing a change. The reorganization of that society on a firmer basis imperatively demands the exaltation of the weaker sex.

The position of women in India has hitherto been one of degradation and servitude. Though the legislators of Hindustán have not, in common with the sterner lawgiver of the Mahomedans, excluded females from Paradise, nor denied that they have souls, they have treated them in every respect, with

marked in ~~in~~finity and contempt, sparing no occasion to give vent to their scorn. "For woman are no separate holy rites, fasts and ceremonies," says Menu. "All she has to do is to worship her husband, and thus will she become famous in Heaven." In another place he tells us, "whether a female be a child, or a young woman, or old, she must ever be dependent. In her childhood she must be in subjection to her parents, in her youth to her husband, and in her old age to her children." And, while the minutest provisions are made in the Shástras, for the mental cultivation of boys, not even one stray text is to be found advocating the instruction of female children. On the contrary, women are in many places expressly refused access to the sacred scriptures of the country, and prohibited the acquirement of literary instruction under a curse. The female who can read and write is branded as the heir of misfortunes. The Veds are not even to be heard by women. "Women," says Menu, "have no business with the texts of the Veds." And from the other sources of information they are also debarred; as, according to the authorities most commonly known and revered, the study of letters is considered a disqualification for domestic usefulness, and the sure, inevitable harbinger of danger and distress. Women have accordingly received no education in this country, neither in childhood, nor in youth, much less in maturer years. Occasionally indeed, there have been extraordinary instances of clever

ladies in the land, notwithstanding these restrictions; and the talents and firmness displayed by them have too, in some cases, been of the very highest order. But these can only be regarded as land-marks to show what the sex is capable of, not what it actually was.

Nor is this all. Not satisfied with debarring woman from mental cultivation, the lawgivers of India have also imputed unto her many of the worst propensities of human nature, and to her conduct attributed all the miseries of human life. All the invective that wit could devise, all the sarcasm that her sex could countenance, have been used—bitterly and brutally used against her, to injure her reputation. “Woman,” say the Gentoo laws, “is never satisfied with the gratification of her appetites, no more than fire is satisfied with burning fuel, or the main ocean with receiving the rivers.” Menu also tells us, that “women are ever ready to corrupt men, whether wise or foolish. Therefore, whether it be a mother, or sister, or daughter, let no man sit with her alone, for the power of lust is great, and even the wise may not withstand it.” In the same strain says the Nit Shaster,—“To lie, to be impudent, to deceive, to speak bitter words, to be unclean and cruel, are all vices inherent in woman’s nature, and, most of all, to find fault with a man if her wishes are not satisfied.” And the Veds declare her to be an incarnation of sin. In the works of some of the sages and poets, though they all generally teem with

the most wicked misrepresentations of her character, there are indeed, some portraits in which she has also been delineated as amiable, modest and high principled ; but we are not speaking now of the occasional opinions of isolated admirers, but of the notions entertained on the subject by the community at large. The nations of antiquity, one and all, appear to have held woman in disesteem, and the more corrupt the character of the people the greater the share of their contempt for the sex. Nowhere has the national character ever been more low than in India, and nowhere was a worse opinion of female integrity generally entertained.

Thus traduced and vilified, thus shut up from all sources of information, the treatment which woman has received here has indeed been most ungenerous and unkind. She has been condemned to seclusion and reduced to servitude; the most innocent freedoms of life have been denied to her; and she has been withheld altogether from intercourse with society. Instead of being permitted to lead the taste and direct the sentiments of man, she has been degraded to a mere concubine and housekeeper. The Talmud dictates that it is beneath the dignity of a Rabbi to talk familiarly with a woman. The rules of Hindu decorum are even more severe than the edicts of the Talmud, for a Hindu woman must not even uncover her face in the presence of strangers. In the earlier ages seclusion in the harem was perhaps not so rigid as at present; and

not only ladies of distinction, but even women in humbler spheres of life, appear to have travelled by themselves with little or no escort. On all public occasions, also, they are said to have freely mixed with the men, forming a part even of bridal and religious processions; and there is no doubt about it, that, but for the barbarities perpetrated by the Mahomedans in India, their social restraints would have never been so severe as we find them now. All this, however, will not justify us in concluding, that the liberty they enjoyed in the heroic times, was anything akin to the freedom enjoyed, at this moment, by the ladies in Europe. The oldest authorities bear out the fact, that, in the house of a Hindu, the apartments of women were always distinct from those of the men, and that they were not accessible to strangers even in the presence of their male relatives and friends. It was always a part of the moral breeding of a woman not to converse with any but her kinsmen,—even lovers talked by proxy; and to live retired in the seclusion of her apartments was ever regarded a virtue. No doubt queens and princesses deviated from this reserve. Such always do so. Even at the present day, there are great ladies who observe not the national rules of modesty.

The position of woman in India has hitherto been that of a servant, and the inattention she has always received has been justly cited as strong evidence against the civilization of the ancient Hindus. The neglect of the sex is observable from the very birth of the child. The longing for a male offspring, in

preference to a female one, is, we fear, an universal feeling, and it is the practice in every country to celebrate the birth of a son with greater pleasure than that of a daughter. In India this partiality is perhaps, somewhat more remarkable than in other lands. In the rearing of children, though they are all affectionately brought up, the daughter's portion in her parents' care, solicitude and tenderness, is frequently considerably less than that of the son; and female children are oftener allowed to run the chances of neglect than boys are. This does not proceed, however, from an absence of love for female children. O no. It results rather from a compliance with the regulations of the Shástras and the customs of the country, which have thought proper to lay down the precise degree of attention they should receive; and there are occasions when they do receive even greater attention than male children. The marriage of a daughter, for instance, is always regarded as a matter of much greater importance than that of a son. In fact, it is often viewed as by far the most important consideration of parents on this side of eternity; and it always gives occasion to great anxiety and deliberation. As soon as it is terminated, however, all their solitudes for the child may be said simultaneously to end. She thenceforth becomes the member of a new family, and it is in this new household that the similarity of her position with that of a servant is most strikingly realized. At her father's house she seldom works as a servant. In the Rámáyan, we read indeed that Sitá, although

the daughter of a king, swept the house.* But this patriarchal custom is passing away. In the husband's family, however, the wife is still tasked to her greatest power. While young she is taught her duties, that is, she is compelled to perform every menial service, and get reprimanded for her pains. As she gets older, her condition changes from that of a subordinate servant to the rank of a steward. In the more opulent families she is never actually a drudge, and neither cooks for the household, nor sweeps the house ; but she superintends all the affairs of the zenana, the details of which are neither few nor light. A multiplicity of little cares, which men shirk off from themselves as unworthy of their attention and dignity, are in all households allotted to her ; while in the poorer families, she is the *factotum*, not only performing all the drudgery of the house, but also, rendering to her lord those very attentions which, in other countries, women receive from men.

For the most part, however, Hindu women are well satisfied with the severity of their lot. Many take pride in the harshness of their task ; as the regularity of the household displays their merit, according to their own notions, to the greatest advan-

* In doing this she was accustomed to lift with one hand the ponderous bow which Janaka had received from Siva, and which, in the extravagant language of the fable, a thousand of his stoutest archers could not raise ; and it was the daily performance of this feat that made the king determine not to give away his daughter to any one who could not bend that bow.

tage. Habituated to regard the management of domestic affairs as the principal object of female care and solicitude, they submit contentedly to every privation in the performance of their duty. The title of a house-wife is a distinction too highly coveted by them to grudge any labour in deserving it. But the chains are not the less galling because they are considered to be of gold.

It is not, however, to be construed from this state of vassalage, that a Hindu woman exercises no great influence on her husband. Though she does not know how to read and write, though her intellect is totally uncultivated, she has other accomplishments whereby to preserve her power. As a wife and a parent she yields to none of her sex in kindness and affection; and her conduct in general is so modest, timid and retiring, that, even for all her ignorance, it would have been wonderful if she had not been held in esteem. Ignorance has indeed in a great measure rendered her unfit for that social intercourse which Nature intended her to adorn; ignorance has indeed degraded her from an equality with her husband. But, the most amiable part of the sex, her heart, continues undeteriorated; and, despised and degraded as she is, she is not on that account altogether void of power. Woman is woman still, all over the world. Even the Hindu husband submits to that influence which he avowedly holds in derision, and, notwithstanding his boasted pre-eminence, is often a cypher in that family of which ostensibly

he is the master, while his wife—the drudge, the steward of the household—though labouring in the meanest offices, is the real autocrat of that little empire,—the presiding deity, whom children and servants are alike anxious to conciliate.

Some of our readers may perhaps, imagine that this influence results only from beauty, and lasts no longer than beauty doth. But this would be an erroneous conclusion. The ladies of Hindustán are beautiful indeed. Their own poets, though unconscious of their virtues, have ever been alive to their charms, and have extolled them with all the exaggeration of oriental fancy ; comparing their stature to the palm, their cheeks to the ripeness of fruits, and their lips to rubies. Beautiful women abound throughout the land ; and the Hindus are not certainly insensible to their attractions. But the influence of the wife over the husband has usually a firmer basis than her beauty. Beauty in the East is of a very short duration. A woman who has past her twentieth year, has passed her bonnier summers. At thirty she is accounted old ; at forty becomes ugly. But her influence is not so short lived ; and it is of much later growth than her beauty. Women are married in this country long before their reason and understanding have arrived at maturity, and the wife begins to burst into beauty when she has reached her twelfth or thirteenth year. But her influence over her husband at that age is comparatively very slight. Good will and affection in the marriage state are gradually acquired,

and are not innate to the union.; the marriages being, not love matches, but, matches effected by parents according to their discretion and judgment. A young wife is, generally, an unimportant, and, often, a neglected personage in the household. She acquires some consequence when she gives birth to an heir; but, even then, it is considered ungenteeled for her to be seen in company with her husband: and her influence over him is not paramount till long after, when the roundness of her limbs has already begun to give way to the advances of age. The secret of this influence therefore, must depend on something distinct from beauty.

We have attributed this influence to the amiability of her heart. We may add to that, as another reason for it, the correctness of her character. If the institutes and ordinances of her country have condemned her morals, they have done so unjustly, and are on this, as almost on every other point, totally destitute of truth; and the Abbè Dubois is right in maintaining, that "amongst good castes, the Hindu females in general, and married women in particular, are worthy to be set forth as patterns of chastity and conjugal fidelity, to individuals of their sex in more enlightened countries." Virtues of a high order are commonly practised amongst them, and there have been many instances of women, who, like Lucretia herself, have preferred death to dishonor, disdaining to survive the slightest suspicion. The current opinion on the subject among Europeans is

that they are immodest and corrupt. But this has only been deduced from the information of writers, who either enjoyed no opportunity of forming a fair judgment, or had imbibed early prejudices which they were loathe to part with. Most of them had no opportunities of entering into social intercourse with the natives ; at all events, never associated with them at the family circle. The women they knew were those by profession dissolute and corrupt; and, seeing none of better character, they jumped at once to the conclusion, that the whole sex in the country was as wanton as the specimens they had met. It would certainly have been more honest on the part of such authors, to have admitted their ignorance on the subject, and urged in palliation the impossibility of doing justice to it, while custom so strictly excluded the female sex from social intercourse with strangers, and while the politest enquiries respecting the female relatives of a man, could not be made without being viewed by him in the light of an affront. Ward says that Hindu women are, to a most fearful extent, unfaithful to the marriage covenant. This from a gentleman of his order, had been a grave charge. But his extraordinary aptness to exaggerate is too well known, and it is almost unnecessary to mention, that his condemnation hath no truth in it.

* Anticipating a difference in opinion on this subject with some of our readers, we wish to be a little more explicit, lest we should be misunderstood. Our remarks have reference only to women of the more res-

pectable classes ; and not only this observation on their moral character, but some of the other observations also, that have been hazarded, would be altogether out of place, if endeavoured to be applied to the lower classes of the community likewise. Thus, for instance, we have said that the women of India are immured with rigor, and never appear in public. But we do not mean that the women of the lower classes are so secluded. They, like individuals of their station in other countries, go abroad when and where they please, without being questioned or interrupted. Some go veiled, but this is not the general practice ; and they mix in all the busy scenes of life, pursuing almost every species of labor and employment promiscuously with men. The higher classes, on the contrary, consider it a drawback on their honor to be seen out of the zenana, and never go out of their houses except in covered conveyances, some old women only excepted, whom the sufferance of society exempts from blame for such exposure. Even these stir not out but to perform their ablutions in the sacred streams, or to visit the temples and shrines of worship ; and will not enter into any social intercourse with men. Every effort to draw them into conversation, though couched in the most civil language, and conveyed in the most respectful manner, would be regarded as an insult ; and they are not even to be saluted, or any notice taken of them without a breach of ordinary politeness. So also, in extolling the moral character of Hindu females, we confine our observations with-

in that section of the class only, which is called "respectable." Of the rest we can barely venture to assert, and this we do with diffidence, that they are neither better, nor probably, much worse, than their like in other lands. The coarse jests and subtle innuendoes, the broad hints and impure expressions, which females of the lower classes exchange with each other in the streets, prevent us from recording any higher estimate of their worth. But of this enough.

The condition of woman in India, such as we have represented it, is susceptible of considerable improvement and amelioration. Her ignorance of letters, though it may not necessarily imply wretchedness or misery in her social condition, is surely not absolutely necessary to her well-being, and might advantageously give way to that mental elevation which the females of other countries have attained, and from which they derive the best portion of their enjoyments and pleasure. She requires not to be solely and exclusively confined to the taking care of her household and the management of her servants. The absurd notions which regard her as unfit for nobler pursuits, deserve no longer to remain unabrogated. The anathemas of old and obsolete laws which prevent the acquisition of knowledge under a curse, if such anywhere yet exist in force, might now for ever be buried along with those laws. Women were not made only for those humble objects to which their attention is exclusively confined in this country. They were designed to make agreeable members of society, to entertain

liberal ideas, to promote civilization, and, above all, to move in the orbit of duty. They have souls, and those souls were not given to them to be starved. When we see that the body, which dies after a limited period, requires food to uphold it in its brief duration, how shall we dare to neglect feeding a deathless mind which will have to sustain itself through eternity! As a moral and immortal being, woman is as much responsible for her conduct to her Maker as man. The lawgivers of India err greatly in considering the wife in morals a satellite to her husband. Her responsibility, in this respect, is entirely her own: and she should surely be enabled to do justice to that responsibility. If the educated youths of Hindustán have learnt to hold their national institutions in derision, their wives also should be taught to bear them company; if they have learnt (at least some of them, we presume, have done so) to entertain more correct notions of God than their ancient sages and patriarchs, it is incumbent on them not to leave their better halves to perish in ignorance. A cultivated mind, merely on account of the culture, can do no harm; and that it may do an infinite deal of good to the soul, will not surely be denied, at this hour of the day, even by a Hindu.

Nor are the social benefits to be derived from the cultivation of the female mind to be overlooked. In a country arrived at a higher stage of civilization than India, they may be disputed or denied, because people are always fond of quarrelling with the advantages

they possess, and will never fully discern their value so long as they have them. But here the absence of female enlightenment shows us the need of it all the more clearly, and the lamentable effects of ignorance can neither be forgotten, nor be unheeded.

As a wife, the Hindu female, it may be ~~averred~~, is as dutiful, affectionate and obedient as any in the world. But being destitute of all literary attainments, the poverty of her uncultivated mind renders her utterly unfit to be an intelligent companion for her husband. We do not say this because he has learnt to speak English, and she does not know it. No; it is not necessary for a woman to speak languages. But the Hindu wife does not know how to speak at all. Look at her face, and the only expression you meet upon it is one of unmeaning vacancy; and, when she speaks, she speaks but childish nonsense. Much indeed would her husband's domestic felicity increase, if her mind were better cultivated—if the affectionate wife were, at the same time, an intelligent friend. All day long his pursuits are competition and gain; he plans and he toils, is restless and troubled; now burning for office, now struggling for power; sometimes attaining his object, more often disappointed in his purposes. If he has friends to speak to, they converse only on merchandize, gain, station, politics. At home, if he has a father, brother and relatives, they renew the eternal talk of ambitious schemes and cruel disappointments, when from business he returns to the bosom of his family. There is no peace for man but

in the company of woman. It is for the woman God has given to him to lure away his heart from worldly excitements, to soothe it, to invigorate it for the toils of the morrow. Why should this being, so all-potent in her influence, be left illiterate,—burdened with little, peddling cares and servile occupations? As her taste is corrected, as her intellectual vision is enlarged, as her spirit is sanctified, so does man's solace in her company increase. Then, why should that taste be left uncultivated, that intellect unnurtured, that spirit uninstructed? The countless hours that they must pass together, require an intellectual sympathy between man and wife, that they may be passed in happiness. No personal charms can compensate for the want of this sympathy. The most agreeable of wives is not she whose cheeks mantle in beauty; but rather she who, though homely, has the talisman to talk away her homeliness. Personal charms die quickly. As the flowers of the wilderness they perish. No one heeds their decay; no one regrets even when the last vestiges are past: and no one admires the old woman for the charms that are gone. Poets have regretted the decay of a flower—faded leaves have grieved the impassioned heart of fancy. But how much more is that human flower to be regretted, which from the budding blossom soon assumes the sere and yellow leaf, and from being courted and caressed for a season is soon thrown aside and forgotten. If for nothing else than to avert this fate—to prevent her being despised and thrown away as a faded flower, when youth is gone, as well

as to increase her husband's happiness, the Hindu wife should receive the benefit of education. There are many Hindu women whom a liberal system of tuition would render objects of the greatest esteem and admiration. In common sense, knowledge of business, and acuteness of observation, there have been those, though few in number, who have shown themselves equal to the ordinary run of men ; and widows who are guardians of their children, thrown upon their own resources, have, in the conduct of their affairs, often displayed an extensive knowledge of men and manners. All such with a little moral and intellectual training would be invaluable in worth.

As a mother the Hindu female is certainly exceedingly warm-hearted and fond. But a child has other claims on its parents besides mere fondness and love. It is not sufficient that it be the object of a mother's unceasing care and solicitude ; it is not sufficient that no labor be spared, no sacrifice withheld to support its infancy with every personal comfort. The little baby has a mighty soul, and it is the duty of both parents to minister to that. To read in its little freaks the development of its character, disposition and propensities ; to devise plans and employ efforts for correcting every fault and supplying every deficiency : these are the glorious prerogatives of a parent, and more especially of that parent who, by her position and constant proximity to the child, is best qualified to render it the greatest services. At their birth all children are nearly alike. The offspring of the most

civilized parents differ not in their internal structure from those of utter barbarians ; heathens in their cradle, are as good as toddling Christians. All children, in fact, are still born in Paradise—a paradise as beautiful as that in which Adam lived and strayed, and born with hearts as sinless and pure as were those of our first parents. What converts this Eden then into an unweeded garden of poppies and mandragoras ? What, but the training which the sinful communicate to the sinless, as the serpent communicated the infection of disobedience unto mother Eve. For the first five or six years the child is entirely dependent on its mother, and within that period, such is a mother's influence, she can so direct its future destiny, as to make or mar its character. If the opinion of schoolmasters were taken, it would be found that, in educating Hindu lads, more difficulty is encountered in weaning them from wrong notions and ideas, than in impressing on them more correct principles. Ask a boy his views of a thunder-storm, of stars, of heaven and hell, and you will get prompt answers, but all of them erroneous ones ;—and what difficulty is felt in making him relinquish these, for which he has often the best authority, that of his mother, tutors alone can testify.* Why is this so, but that the mother

* Sometime ago, at the examination of some female schools at Bombay, one little girl maintained that diamonds were to be found on the head of snakes. Sir Erskine Perry endeavoured to argue her out of this belief ; but the young lady had heard honest and wise people tell her of it, and would not give it up.

is ignorant. Nature has provided her with patience, gentleness, eloquence and love; educate her, and she becomes fit for her duty. Who so fit to teach a child as she, who can weave instruction and love in one sweet cestus around its heart? It is her duty to call forth the energies of the infant mind, her's to protect the young heart from errors and wanderings, her's to impart to it the rudiments of knowledge. She feeds it with nectar from her bosom to supply its animal wants, but her child requires mental nutriment also to make it a man. Is this mother to be left illiterate—this being who can hardly breathe around herself without blighting, or shedding freshness and life on the souls of her children? Utterly untaught, and unable to read and write, what seeds of future improvement can she cultivate on the rich waste of infancy? or how shall she prevent rank weeds from fastening on that fertile soil, when she hath no good seeds to sow? When Bonaparte asked Madame Campan, what was wanting to place the education of the youths of France on the best footing, she answered—"good mothers;" a brief, sententious reply, but which the Emperor admitted was pregnant with good sense. If for nothing else, still for the sake of her children should the mind of the Hindu mother be imbued with knowledge, that they may imbibe that thirst for knowledge, and that impulse towards improvement, which, fostered and encouraged, will enable them to pass through life with advantage to themselves, and honor to their country. How without

mothers like Cornelia, should we expect to find children like the Gracchi ?

As the mistress of a household the Hindu female is unquestionably amiable ; and of this the best proof is, that, though several brothers with their families often live together, the zenana generally, is an abode of quietness and peace. Even the wives of the same man interchange civilities, and call each other sister. But it is not sufficient for an excellent housewife to be endowed with a mere amiability of temper. In sustaining the ordinary trials and temptations of life, in avoiding the frequent accidents and dangers that every household is exposed to, great intrepidity and energy of character will often require to be called forth, and exerted ; and is *she* to be left uneducated who is expected to meet emergencies like these ?—is *her* understanding to be left vacant, on whom they fall with greatest violence ? The responsibilities of her position, in this respect, are greater than those of man ; and to meet these, if for no other purpose, should her whole nature, physical, intellectual and moral, be fully developed.

These are obvious truths, which, to be admitted, require only to be told. None will venture to deny them, except those, who, being themselves ignorant, are naturally enough, averse to educate their wives. That there are many such in India we doubt not, for there are many such in all parts of the world, and from people of this character only have emanated those innumerable obstacles, in the shape of obloquies,

sarcasms and arguments, which have, from time to time, been thrown in the way of female education in Europe. The gist of all their arguments is that there is much natural difference of capacity between man and woman, and that woman has better, that is more necessary spheres of usefulness, than any which the cultivation of the intellect can open to her.

Of the first position we entertain some doubts. Because in no part of the world woman has been equally well educated with man, man has taken advantage of her inferior tuition, to say, that God has created her inferior to him. But, rather than enter into any abstruse reasoning on the subject, we will admit the force of the objection, at least for the nonce. If her Maker has given to woman less intellectual powers than he has allotted to man, he has done so for the wisest of purposes. But why prevent her from cultivating the portion he has allowed her? So far as God has made the sexes to differ, let the difference continue. We do not wish to confound them. Deep learning in a lady we do not covet. A lady barrister or a lady doctor, a lady mathematician or a lady philosopher, are not absolutely necessary to the world. Nay, we require them not—no more than we want a masculine woman to arm for the siege or the foray, or to toil in those coarser employments for which her physical constitution is so unsuited. But as she has some capacities to be cultivated, let those be well nurtured. We ask no more.

That God has designed woman for a peculiar sphere of action, we do not deny. Nor do we object to her toiling where God has appointed her lot. We do not require her to desert the interests of her children, and devote her hours entirely to the reading of Shakspeare and Milton ; we do not require her to abate her care and solicitude for the best new novel, or the most popular new Magazine. On the contrary, we think no intellectual elevation, however great, atones in a woman for the want of domestic affections and virtues. Let her attend to her children, let her attend to the management of the household, let her do full justice to the functions of her sphere; let her sew, patch and mend old clothes, if her husband cannot afford to pay a tailor;* let her prepare preserves and condiments, and even cook for her husband if he cannot keep a servant. These occupations will make her all the healthier and happier, without impairing her nobler powers. But why should she be unable to read and write? why should idle time hang heavy on her when she has no domestic economy to attend to? why should she be forced to resort to such brainless diversions as playing at pitch-toss, with small stones and pebbles, when all her manual work is done? or, worse still, wile away the time in silly conversation? God did not design that nothing noble should be allowed to divert her mind from the drudgery of domestic labor, or that she should be entirely

* In India, women generally do no needle work.

bound down "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer."

That education unfits a woman for domestic duties, is a notion supremely absurd. The experiment is not an untried one, nor are the results unknown. The ladies in Europe (and in almost all the European countries the women are more or less educated,) are not surely destitute of household virtues. They discharge their duties, as wives and parents, fully as well as their uneducated sisters of this country. We are not aware that any where the husband is burdened with any but out-of-door duties, or that the wife neglects house-keeping because it is mechanical. Nothing is too mechanical and prosaic, even for an intellectual woman, when she feels that what she does, she does for her husband and children. In the most civilized countries, those whose circumstances require it, perform willingly all the household drudgery as is done in the East, coarse, masculine employments only excepted, which do not legitimately belong to their sex, and which are nowhere allotted to them except in barbarous and pagan lands. And if such has been the result of the experiment in Europe, we shall surely not be justified in apprehending a different outturn here.

The good which the instruction of woman will effect to the country, is on the other hand incalculable. It will give important habits to one-half of the human race in the land, who have now, except in

feeding their children, and attending to some ordinary manual occupations, no serious work to perform. For all her virtues and amiabilities, the position of a Hindu woman, at this moment, is that of a painted image, decked and ornamented to charm simpletons, indemnifying herself for the absence of intellectual and moral indulgences, by the most childish frivolities, and wasting the noblest energies of the mind in the discharge of occupations for which a little money would find a better substitute. If education exalts this simple and degraded being to the proper elevation of a human creature, draws her off from her petty and frivolous occupations to duties calculated to exercise the full energies of her soul, it will have done no little amount of good. Where a powerful understanding exists it is no little loss to the world that it is left uncultivated, or engrossed with light labors and simple pleasures; for the world is not so stocked with intelligence that it can be contented to receive the services of a child from the intellect of a grown-up human being.

Education also exercises no mean influence on virtue. We read in the Greek fables that Agamemnon, on his departure for Troy, committed his wife to the care of a poet and philosopher, to teach her her duties, and to divert her attention from criminal thoughts and trivial topics. Nor could Ægisthus succeed in seducing the queen from the paths of rectitude and honor, till the bard was separated from her company and banished afar. Implant but

the bard and the philosopher in her mind, so as to render it impossible for wisdom to be separated from her company, and you at once secure woman from the arts of the wicked. It has been urged, indeed, as a fact, that, in breaches against morality, the most civilized nations are not much in rear of the most barbarous ; and that female depravity is pretty nearly as outrageous in those countries where the women are educated, as in those where they are not. Crimes, it is said, now walk the earth unblushingly, and, as if they were licensed and privileged, hand in hand with civilization. How far this is true might be questioned. Even admitting the entire position as such, we would still maintain that the virtue of an educated woman is a much nobler sentiment than that of an uneducated woman. The conjugal affection of the one is merely a passion, while of the other it is something more—a principle. She who preserves her honor from principle is priceless in her worth, and ever secure from danger ; she who sticks to virtue only from the intensity of a personal attachment, or out of regard to social morality, may be an angel,—but is liable to a fall.

Her own happiness, also, which is certainly not a trivial consideration in itself, would be vastly increased in proportion as education imparted to woman the habit of elevating her character to meet the emergencies of life. The pursuit of knowledge, at the same time that it is the most innocent of employments, is also the most fraught with felicity. It

opens not only large resources of usefulness, but also of pleasure ; and there is no condition of life to which one may be exposed, with which the consolations of knowledge would be unable to reconcile her. Under present circumstances, we doubt if one human being can be so utterly in the power of another, as is the Hindu wife in that of her husband. Her earthly happiness or misery depend entirely on his humour. When a woman is subjected to the ill-treatment of a brutal husband, or deserted by him, and left to endure in silence and solitude his unkindness, how shall she sustain herself, under the unmerited misfortune, if she has not a cultivated mind from which to draw out not only consolation but comfort ? Were she educated, even in such isolation she could never have been "alone"—no, not even if she were expatriated from the haunts of men, and left to dwell only by herself, in some impervious solitude. Perpetual widowhood, also, is another terrible misfortune which may befall the lot of every woman in India. The law forbids re-marriage even to the infant widow, though she should never have lived together with her husband ; and custom will not permit her to disregard its severe injunctions. How is this child to grow in grace, who is thus debarred from the ordinary enjoyments of life ? How is she to avoid temptations, who can taste no pleasures which are not illegal ? Whence is she to derive comfort under the disabilities she labors under, while her mind is left an uncultivated blank ? In a word, how is she to know, that, though the earth looks

dark and drear, though sorrow pursues her from the very cradle to the pyre, still heaven is bright ? Then again, there are scenes of distress and anguish oft occurring in every family; in which women are both expected and called upon to take an active part. With the benevolent and impassioned virtues all women are naturally abundantly endowed ; but the finest qualities of the heart still require training, and untrained are insufficient to meet fully the emergencies of life. Nay, leaving out the accidents of life altogether, and taking only the ordinary course of existence into consideration, we cannot overlook the great use of knowledge when we see that it gives us full work for all hours of the day, and remember that God has wedded industry and happiness together. • The mind that is unoccupied, or occupied only with trifles, is too apt to roam where it should not. Left to idleness it rusts away. And if education only gives to a woman work enough to engross her hours, habits of usefulness, and occupations to render the vicissitudes of life indifferent, the good derivable from it must be pronounced to be incalculable; for constant labor is as it were a ballast to the human mind, indispensable in every rank of life.

Further, on the education of women depends, in a great measure, the education of men. Man is constitutionally a prouder being than woman ; and though, in many countries, he has so far violated the plainest decrees of nature as to reduce his helpmate into utter servitude and ignorance, we do not see that in any

part of the world, any motive has ever induced him to adopt the contrary extreme, so far as to subscribe to his own degradation, and agree to cut a lower or less important figure than his better half. He cannot, for a moment, endure the idea of being regarded as inferior to her; and the education of women has always, and every where, been found, if from no higher motive than mere vanity, to be the best spur to his intellectual ambition. The Hindus are yet very much in the rear, when compared with other nations, on the high-road of civilization; and one of the best means to accelerate their progress would be to educate their women, that is, to render it shameful for a man to be ignorant. Of one fine girl educated in Mrs. Wilson's school at Calcutta, Mrs. Chapman, in her little volume on Female Education, records that, on being married, she "contrived to obtain a promise from her husband that she should continue to attend the school," and she adds that, "it is stated, she has since taught her husband to read." The fact speaks volumes.

Some people are afraid, that a common pursuit with man would render woman more a rival than a help-mate of her husband; and that this would cause such jealousy, contention and alarm, as would be detrimental to the love and harmony that should ever subsist in the marriage state. The ridiculousness of such apprehensions hardly deserves to be exposed. The love which subsists between man and woman is ordained by Divine Providence, and it is absurd to think, that, that can be disturbed by an emulation which, even

amongst men, where the same partiality does not and cannot naturally exist, leads to no mortal feud or deadly hatred. Further, does not every wife like to have a handsome husband, and every husband like to have a handsome wife ; and if the rivalry of beauty does not set them at odds, but rather unites them more affectionately to each other, why should the rivalry of talents lead to any such unfortunate consequence, as is apprehended, instead of stifling the worst emotions of the heart, and calling into exercise the very best ? If the facts of history be properly considered, we shall find that it is female enlightenment which has contributed most effectually towards the downfall of heathenism and the triumph of Christianity ; and the knowledge of God and salvation has been exalted in general estimation principally by the exertion of pious mothers, wives and sisters.

But how should the women of India be educated ? That is the principal consideration for us to notice, and verily it is a serious and difficult consideration. As we reckon them among human beings, it is plain that they should be educated as such ; that is, as having an intellectual, moral and spiritual nature. But it is not so easy exactly to determine the model or standard according to which they should be instructed. Many of the friends of native female education hold up the standard of European tuition for copy. But the beaten path is not always the best one, and we are not bound to be partial to it because it has the current stamp. The education of an English miss

generally, partakes too much of the character of a mechanical drill to be universally coveted. It fits her well to display with coquetry the charms of youth and beauty,—a dexterity perhaps harmless in the cold climates of the North, but which would make woman a wild animal in this land of the sun ; teaches her to dance, to sing, to paint, and do the pretty ; in many cases, it even enables her to determine with precision, whether the Ganges is in America, or in Japan ; and to speak Frenchified nonsense with volubility, and sputter Italian as Bráhmans do their exordium. But the judgment is utterly neglected, the understanding not cultivated at all. This is altogether a wrong system. We would, on the contrary, recommend a cultivation of the understanding and the judgment, as the first and primary aim of instruction ; for these have a practical value, which the accomplishments more generally coveted have not : and, in our opinion, female education should every where be of a practical character ; for women are only intended to be helpmates to people of business, and not to affect air, carriage, and coquetry. Man in many professions may dispense with a practical capacity for work, but not woman in any. The poet, the artist, the mathematician, may and do leave business entirely out of their aim ; but it will not do for their wives to imitate them in that. They must play the practical parts of life, and for this their unwavering destiny they should be primarily trained. Men are citizens of the world. They have been likened to gods of sea, land and air. But wo-

men are household deities, whose world—whose sphere of usefulness—is their home. If this is true of all countries, it is especially so of this. What will the accomplishments of an English miss avail woman here? Carried out to perfection, what is the model worth?

Nor are we anxious + + + unto Hindu women a learned education. We do not attach any extraordinary value to petti-coated philosophers, star-gazers and metaphysicians ; we do not covet such ornaments for the domestic hearth. What woman knows is ever of less importance than what woman is. Superior attainments in the walks of science and literature, though they steal more time from husband and children, than a woman has a right to waste, seldom contribute to confer on her character any of its most estimable features ; and for their own worth we cannot value them so highly in women, as in men. The Hindus, for ages to come, will stand in no urgent need of such acquirements amongst their ladies. To impart piety and moral elevation to the females of India, and a practical training to make them good wives and competent mothers, would therefore be more befitting as the immediate object of our exertions. Loftier attainments, which, though they sooner win renown, do not correct those errors which make a mind discontented, and a family unhappy, might be left to follow more leisurely, if they need follow at all.

As for accomplishments which serve only for show, they could altogether be left out of the catechism of female education. It is barely necessary to make a

woman a wise, gentle and steady wife and mother ; and she does not require at all to be instructed on the piano, or taught to dance. To both these accomplishments the natives have an inveterate prejudice. They consider it unbecoming for a modest woman to play on musical instruments, or to skip, or to sing. We doubt if this has always been the national opinion. In the Márkundeya Purán it is mentioned, that when Nárád met Indra, in the Nandana forest, he saw the god in the midst of the heavenly *apsaras*, and on being told to command them, said,—“ Let her dance and sing before me who is superior to the rest in beauty, spirit and virtue; *for to such only are these accomplishments befitting.*” But since the days of Nárád the tone of society has undergone a change, and many prejudices have sprung up which formerly had no existence. Most of these prejudices indeed, are such as cannot be respected without disadvantage ; but the prejudice against dancing and singing, as female accomplishments, is certainly not of that character. We regard it as a pardonable feeling, which can easily be tolerated ; it being of no importance whatever to teach a woman the qualifications objected to, the more especially, as women skilful in them do not always make the best wives and mothers. We know that it may be urged, that the defective education of women in these accomplishments, has contributed more to bring libertinism amongst the men in fashion than anything else. Young men, disgusted with the cheerless frigidity at home, resort to houses of ill-fame for

those gratifications and enjoyments which they are not permitted to relish within the domestic circle. There may be some truth in this; but not so much as would justify us in converting the abodes of good, sober men into something like houses of ill-fame, because perchance some inmates of the family love revelry more than decency. The simple, unobjectionable habits of the many are not to be sacrificed to humour the lightness and giddiness of a few.

We have said that women are like household deities, and that their only sphere of usefulness is their home. In educating them this truth should never be lost sight of. There have been fanatics in the world who required them to be trained for public life. But the notions they entertained have long passed away. Now no one wishes to see woman in the market, tasking her delicate constitution in those pursuits for which she was not ordained by her Maker—no one wishes to see her conversant in politics—no one requires her to enter into the lists with man for station or fortune, fame or power. Woman becomes coarse and masculine under such training, and loses that gentleness and modesty which constitute her chief grace; and the world is become too wise now even for fools and simpletons to advocate theories, which many clever men, in earlier ages, delighted to uphold. The error of Lycurgus is well known, and we have profitted by it. Aristotle remarks, that, desirous of converting his women into men, he only succeeded in rendering them shameless and profligate. We are

not afraid of any similar blunder being committed with respect to the instruction and training of Hindu females; for the greatest utilitarians of the age only demand modest service from the sex, so that woman may know her place and functions, and perform tasks commensurate to her abilities. But no one requires her to unsex herself. Educate her by all means, and, if she be the weaker of the two sexes, give her the better culture—raise her mind and elevate her feelings. But let woman be woman still.

What we would more pointedly warn against is that, in the present condition of the world, the sentence which her Maker pronounced on woman after the fall,—“Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee,”—be not subverted. The mistaken gallantry of men has done a great deal of mischief in Europe which we should be sorry to see extended hither. The Hindu woman is now a drudge and a servant. This is bad, very bad indeed. But we would rather wish her to continue what she is, than see her converted at once into an idiot, to be served with that sickly and sentimental devotion which characterizes the gallantry of Paris and other European cities. Rescue her from the personal restraints and moral disadvantages she labors under, ~~free~~ her from bondage, raise her to the sphere which Providence manifestly intended for her. But do not change her into a plaster-cast ninny.

The boys of India are now being very well educated, and we have no objection to a standard, similar to the one pursued in teaching them, being adopted for

the girls. It will require some modifications to be suited to the sex, for the female character and duties are different from those of men; and one great error adhered to in the tuition of the latter, should, if that can be done, be especially avoided. We allude to the exclusive cultivation of the intellect. Even at school the Hindu youth receives no moral training. Though destined all life long to the close and oppressive atmosphere of a graceless world, not even in his earlier days is he permitted to breathe the pure air of heaven. The effect of this is, that, though we see the native intellect vindicating itself every where around us, we find the native character yet comparatively in the rear. We should be very sorry to see this error perpetuated in the education of the fair sex; for, however much a well-trained intellect in itself may be useful to man, in his vigorous encounters with the world, to woman, whose theatre of action is more peaceful, it can avail nothing unless her moral energies are also duly cultivated. A boy, though tainted with the effluvia of an Augean world, may yet be admired, respected and beloved; but a girl, to be prized, must breathe of nothing but flowers and heaven. A boy rude, immoral and violent, may be tolerated in society for other parts, but a girl can have no worth that will compensate for a deficiency in moral character. A corrupt lad will be believed and aided when he promises to grow better, and, after he has done so, will be permitted to resume his original position in life; but, even in the most enlightened

countries of the earth, the repentant woman can never fully regain her lost name and rank. There are Magdalen Asylums in Europe, where many a fair sinner wipes her faults clean with tears. But how few of these are wooed and wedded! Such is woman! Man holds her character in higher estimation than his own, and values it accordingly; and therefore should she be educated in greater holiness. We do not mean that nothing should be taught her but sermons and moral discourses. O no! Let her have light reading—fine, oriental and romantic tales, stories steeped in dew-drops and garlanded with flowers. But these should at the same time be the vehicle of healthy instruction, and should teach her of God, whom no intellect is too weak to appreciate, and of a higher tribunal than that of her own feelings and passions. The suitable instruction for women may be thus ranked and divided; 1. *Moral*, 2. *Domestic*, 3. *Literary*, 4. *Ornamental*.

But how is all this training to be effected? Public schools for the education of girls are not tolerated in India. The Hindus consider the exposure of women as unfavorable to morals; and there is undoubtedly some truth in the idea, though they push it to a ridiculous extent. When this exposure leads to an indiscriminate intercourse between the sexes, it is a little unfavorable to morals; and, if gadding abroad is in fashion in Europe, we know that much good never comes of it, either to the wives or to their husbands. The ideas of propriety amongst the Hindus are so strict on this point, that they will not permit them to send

out even their *children* for tuition. The schools that have been set up, from time to time, for this benevolent purpose, either by European ladies, Missionaries, or other warm-hearted persons, could not obtain the attendance of the daughters of respectable families ; and those females that did and do resort to them for instruction, are, for the most part, either Christian converts, or women of those humble classes which do not observe the rules of seclusion.

Then again, there is the early marriage of Hindu girls, another powerful obstacle in the way of their improvement. At a very early age Hindu girls are given away in marriage. Of this practice it is not our purpose here to say much. European writers in general have strongly condemned it, objecting to an union effected without the knowledge and consent of the parties concerned, (who are often perfect strangers to each other,) and at a time, when one of the parties at least, if not both, is utterly unfit to judge on the subject. But if this appears odious, and we will not deny that it has a rather mercantile aspect, we must not forget that it has one great advantage which European marriages have not. In the first place early marriages are indispensable to the country, as the climate contributes to develop the constitution much sooner than in other lands : and the girl matures into the mother before her equals in age, in colder climates, entertain any idea of being married. This admitted, who could be entrusted with managing the union but parents, when the parties united are in judgment and

discretion so green? The advantage resulting from the system is this, that there is no elopement, no throwing away oneself on a dolt or a villain, no losing of hearts for a plume or a ribbon, no paying, as Lady Blessington so caustically observes, for a month of honey with a life-full of vinegar. The parents choose, and not the children; and, being free from the heat and folly of youth, they generally choose wisely. Both the husband and wife have thus the advantage of cool deliberation and a sound judgment which nothing can hoodwink; and future happiness is not sacrificed to a momentary passion. There is never any hurry in concluding these matches, and they are always preceded by the most minute and anxious enquiries on both sides, respecting the health and circumstances of the parties to be connected : and more especially about the character and attainments of the husband. Sometimes, indeed, worldly motives do lead to youth and age being united. But this occurs every where, all over the world. And some times, too, a good wife is sacrificed to a bad husband. But this does not impugn the system, for when this is done, it is done in contravention to its fundamental principles. Says Menu,—“It is better that a damsel should remain unmarried, and for ever at home, than that she should be given away to a bridegroom void of excellent qualities.” Nor is it a common case. While, on the other hand, it is by no means of scarce occurrence for husband and wife to find out, as they increase in years, that their parents had displayed the most consummate wis-

dom in marrying them to one another. The adoration of romance is indeed seldom realized. But that affection is not necessarily tame or undignified, which is not romantic.

But the consummation of marriages at an early age stands greatly in the way of female improvement. A married girl enters, as it were, a new situation, when she exchanges the easy guardianship of a father for the severer government of her husband's household. Now she must give up all the vivacity natural to her years, and all the freedom of her life. The days of total seclusion have commenced, and there is no more going to public shows and amusements, no liberties of thought or fancy, to be openly indulged in. She must not open her lips, except in the presence of her junior relatives, ask no questions, but drudge, drudge, drudge, while she has work on hand, or enact the part of a statue when she has none. The smallest familiarity with strangers is viewed as an offence, and even intimacy with all of her kinsmen is not to be thought of. She must endure in silence what she has to endure, and, just at the age best suited for intellectual culture, neglect that culture altogether, and take lessons in those manual occupations which, in other countries, devolve mostly on servants. From her father's house she comes untaught, and in her husband's house she learns nothing calculated to strengthen her understanding, or improve her happiness. The boy, whose education is neglected in youth, learns something afterwards by his dealings with the world. Trades, profes-

sions, business, teach him what was neglected at school. But the girl has no dealings with the world, for she belongs not to the world. From one prison she enters into another more cribbed and confined, and harder labor is enjoined her when she changes her lot. How much a family gains by enforcing this drudgery it were worth while to enquire. The most hard-working girl, tasked to her greatest powers, does not and cannot perform more service than would be worth three or four pice a day, if it were paid for. And for this little saving are the girls denied all mental and moral culture, to the prejudice of their own souls, and the souls of those future men they are destined to give birth to, even in most of those families where large sums are annually spent in the most worthless, and worse than worthless, rites and ceremonies.

To suggest means by which the education of Hindu females can be successfully prosecuted, in spite of such difficulties as these, is by no means an easy task. So many plans have already been tried, and, after having been pursued for a time with vigor and energy, given up, that it has often appeared to us a hopeless work altogether, so long as the moral enlightenment of the male section of the community does not reach a higher standard than it has yet attained. The one is obviously dependant on the other. Nature herself bids woman look for example to man ; nor can her relative position be advanced while the male character is wanting in proportionate elevation. The men must be entitled to educated wives before they can get

them; nor is it sufficient that there are some dozens of young men, or even some hundreds, scattered up and down the country, who merit such, to carry out a systematic reform. We cannot, however, altogether discard the notion that the two reforms might proceed in mutual companionship, aiding each other; and it is under this impression only, that efforts have been so perseveringly made to accomplish, what otherwise should have been abandoned as impracticable. In the absence of any active co-operation from the natives themselves, all the labor has necessarily devolved on the European residents in the country; and these, though ever anxious to avail themselves of every opportunity to do justice to the task, have been obliged to change their plans of operation so often, that, though this undertaking, so truly philanthropic, was first projected by the Baptist Missionaries in 1819, after the lapse of thirty-four years we still find ourselves where we were at the outset:—the apathy of the community being the great stumbling-block in the way of improvement. We may, however, now expect better things; and from the growing desire of the native youth to have good, useful and intelligent companions in women, as well as from the sense of their inferiority to European nations, which they are now beginning keenly to feel, we are encouraged to resume the prosecution of the good work. If the fever, which rages now, continues unabated for a while, there is much to hope for and nothing to despair of, particularly as the elders of the community appear

also, to have simultaneously lessened their apathy concerning the education of their daughters. But the plans must be changed again, or at least remodelled. The nature of the materials we have at our command, and which we are to work upon, will hardly justify us in continuing to direct our labors into that same channel in which they have hitherto been so inoperative ; and other means, heretofore neglected, must now be resorted to for success.

As the Hindus will not agree to a public tuition of their female children, we should try to give them a private education. The public school principle has had a fair trial. Had it succeeded, it would have achieved the most certain and the most permanent triumphs. But its influence on the community has been slender, and for some years to come, we anticipate no better results. We have had enough of it, from the experiments of Mrs. Wilson to those of Mr Bethune. The philanthropic zeal and piety of Mrs. Wilson first originated a school at Calcutta, in which the education of native females has for a long time been prosecuted with vigor. But the children who resort there for instruction, belong only to the lowest classes of the community—those, in fact, whose male relatives, fathers and brethren, are uneducated themselves. And the late Mr. Bethune, too, if his efforts have not succeeded to rival the range of Mrs. Wilson's usefulness, has added to the beauty of the City of Palaces, by raising a magnificent structure to be appropriated to female tuition. On the western side of India also, the

same scheme has been carried on for some time under happy auspices and very fortunate circumstances; and more considerable progress appears to have been made at Bombay than any where else. In the Female schools maintained by the Students' Scientific and Literary Society, there are now about 45 Parsee and 130 Hindu girls, and the extent of attainments these have reached is said to be very encouraging. But the happy results even there are, after all, but scanty. The good seed has yielded but a poor harvest, and the prospects of success are by no means extraordinarily animating. In all places, the inaptitude of the means employed to surmount the obstacles that presented themselves, has been proved. What we now suggest is, that, since the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet should go to the mountain—since Hindu girls will not be permitted to come out of their zenanas to receive education, we should push education into the zenana, and so accomplish the miracle. In some respects this plan appears to us preferable to the education of girls in a public school. For, as the worth of women is higher than that of men, it is the more desirable that the former should be educated in holier places than the latter; and what place is holier than home? Magdalena Pazzi is said to have mentioned in her last moments, that she did not know, and could not conceive what a sin against modesty was. If it be desirable to educate her sex after her manner, that they may, like her, be innocent of all breaches against modesty, a public school is not the best place for female

tuition, for there the example of such breaches are never rare. Girls of similar ages associating together, cannot altogether fail to injure each other, provoking thoughts and banter which in one's own family can never be dreamt of. Even this apart, a violent, dull-minded, coarse girl cannot be brought into contact with a gentle and delicate creature without injury to the tender susceptibilities of the latter. Our readers, however, must not conclude that we are altogether unconscious of the mutual good influence of equals. No such thing. We fully appreciate its value, and to receive the benefit derivable from it, at the same time that the infection of evil company is avoided, we would suggest that the children of neighbours, who naturally associate together, might be collected with advantage on the premises of one, to form a pretty respectable class, and receive instruction together.

But how is instruction to be imparted to such family classes? Female delicacy requires that girls should be educated chiefly by their own sex : and the rule of propriety among the Hindus renders this imperative, as none but females are permitted free entrance into the zenana. The first step to secure the end therefore, must be to set up normal schools* for educating

* In Calcutta they have already opened a Female Normal School ; but it would betray a very narrow idea of the field to be cultivated to believe that one such nursery for all India would give the *plan fair play*. Others must be started in other parts of the country. There should be at least half a dozen in each Presidency.

female converts, (we mean the females of poor native Christians,) or other women who may consent to be so trained up; and these, when duly qualified, will find no difficulty in making their way into the zenanas of even the most bigotted Hindus, to impart there that tuition which they will have received. It is desirable that these females be of good character. But this selection it is difficult to make. The mischief, however, is not likely to be very great, should even one or two black sheep mix in the herd. We read that the Romans used their Grecian slaves as tutors for their children. But we do not read that those children necessarily became either Greeks or slaves. The training that is to be given them should be of an unexceptionable character. They must receive a sound, moral education, and be at the same time versed in literary attainments, and stocked with much general information; and with these should be taught habits of unremitting zeal and diligence. As to the manner how they should teach children we are unprepared to lay down absolute rules. An earnestness of purpose in the tutor we would prefer to a cold observance of a set course, and in children we would recommend intense application to be by all means avoided. The laws of their order forbid the Jesuits, we think, from studying longer than two hours in the twenty-four; and for little children, to study for that time attentively is quite as much as any could wish. Should grown-up girls attend the classes, and we see no reason why they should not,

we would extend the time to four hours ;—two in the morning and two in the afternoon will be a good arrangement to take off the tedium. Variety in the study will also be desirable, as it is always a source of interest and attention. To attach importance and respect to the system, we would also recommend, that Christian ladies of character and position, if they will agree to submit to the drudgery, and can divest themselves of the prejudices of associating with the heathen, might be employed as honorary visitors to superintend the progress of the system. We do not expect any opposition to our plan from the native gentry, at least none from those inhabiting the principal cities. The education thus conferred, will, in the beginning, be very simple and elementary—the progress will be slow—the success very limited. But a little progress is better than none at all. From bad to better is a move in the right direction. Nor shall we despair, from such small beginnings, of being eventually repaid for all our troubles, by succeeding to render the Hindu female, in her own secluded apartment, as intelligent a wife, and as useful a mother as any in Christendom.

For the poorer classes day schools have answered, and will continue to answer. But children only resort to them. Women, after they are married, generally cannot, not on account of any seclusion that follows their espousal—for the poor are nowhere immured—but because of the responsibility and drudgery that marriage involves. Out-of-door instruc-

tion is always unavailable to a poor man's wife. To give such therefore, the first rudiments of instruction, in an impressive manner, in their younger years, that they may follow up the same themselves through life, is all the good that can be done for them. It appears impossible to achieve more. Even to achieve this well will require further exertions and larger contributions than have yet been brought into play ; for the means now in operation are quite disproportioned to the magnitude of the undertaking. When Mrs. Wilson (then Miss Cooke) came out to India, with the purpose of devoting herself to the education of the heathen girls, before commencing upon her work she visited a native school for boys, to observe how things were managed in such establishments, and to judge therefrom what steps she should have to adopt in carrying out her object. An European lady visiting the native part of the town was, in those days, not an ordinary sight ; and a crowd soon collected around the door of the school-room to see her. Among the foremost in the throng was a little, interesting girl, who pressed nearer and nearer every moment, and whom the schoolmaster at last drove away. But Miss Cooke desired the child to be recalled, and, asking her if she wanted to read, was told in reply, that for three months she had been daily soliciting permission to read with the boys, but had not been suffered to do so, and had been driven away. The same anxiety for instruction amongst female children continues to this day. But where are the means to satisfy it?

The gathering of destitute orphan female children also, is a work of kindness from which the most favorable results have been derived, and from which much more might be expected. The number of such unfortunate little things is very great in the principal cities of India ; and the friends and kin on whom they depend, are, for the most part, such only as are more glad to part with than support a burthen. Mrs. Wilson collected a large number of these orphans, and it was assuredly one of the most benevolent things the good lady did that she brought them up all as Christians. But our object should not be only to make them Christians ; for that would confine our operations, deter many from availing themselves of our kindness, and but very partially influence the improvement of the mass. Such as consent to become Christians might be made such. But there would remain many others who should also be taken care of, and taught to read and write, and be instructed in the morals of Christianity, though not forced to its doctrines. The attainments which the girls, collected by Mrs. Wilson, reached, are said to have been only of very ordinary character. Except in worsted work and embroidery they displayed no peculiar talents. But the disappointment experienced in them must have resulted from some fault in the system of instruction pursued, and not in the pupils. Perhaps the anxiety to teach them the Lord's Prayer had, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the desire of teaching them grammar and arithmetic. A better, that is, a more

judiciously regulated course of tuition, would, we are assured, lead to more triumphant results; and as from Mrs. Wilson's experiment we perceive that the industry of the girls can be made to pay for their living, and that the first outlay is the only real charge in such undertakings, we wonder that there are not many more orphan refuges in the country than we can actually boast of.

The chief object of these refuges, as well as of the schools for pauper children, should be to impart industrious and economical habits to the girls resorting to them for instruction. They should be taught useful occupations, such as knitting, netting, and other handicrafts calculated to render them independent in after life. To these, writing, arithmetic, the elements of grammar and geography, and such other rudiments of knowledge might be advantageously added; and should some children evince talents of more than ordinary superiority, such might be selected for being brought up in the normal schools already alluded to.

The necessities of India are so extensive, that, from the partial adoption of the measures suggested, any great degree of success of course is not reasonably to be expected. Operations on a more extensive scale, than any yet commenced upon, are urgently called for. Nor should every thing be left to the religious to accomplish, as if they were Briarean in their powers. Without the active and munificent co-operation of all classes, clergy and laity, Christian and heathen, there is little chance of securing much

HINDU FEMALE EDUCATION.

cess; and we would not exempt the Government from participating in the responsibility of the undertaking. Hitherto the Government has not interfered with the education of women; but surely, it is as liberal in supporting the diffusion of knowledge among girls as among boys: and if it is a duty in the one case, it is undoubtedly as much so, in the other. The country has not yet arrived at that stage of civilization, which would enable it to dispense with the assistance of the Government, in carrying out such an important means of improvement. Individual exertion has not effected it; and, in our opinion, the Government is no longer justified in withholding its assistance and interference from the measure, after having recognised the teaching of male children as an obligation.

